What's his stand? NEA's presidential pick speaks p34
Classroom technology to make you happy p30
What does your desk say about you? p32

SEPTEMBER 2004

neatoday

The Magazine of the National Education Association

INVESTMENT PROSPECTUS

INDUSTRY:
K-12 Education

LOCATION:
Any Public School

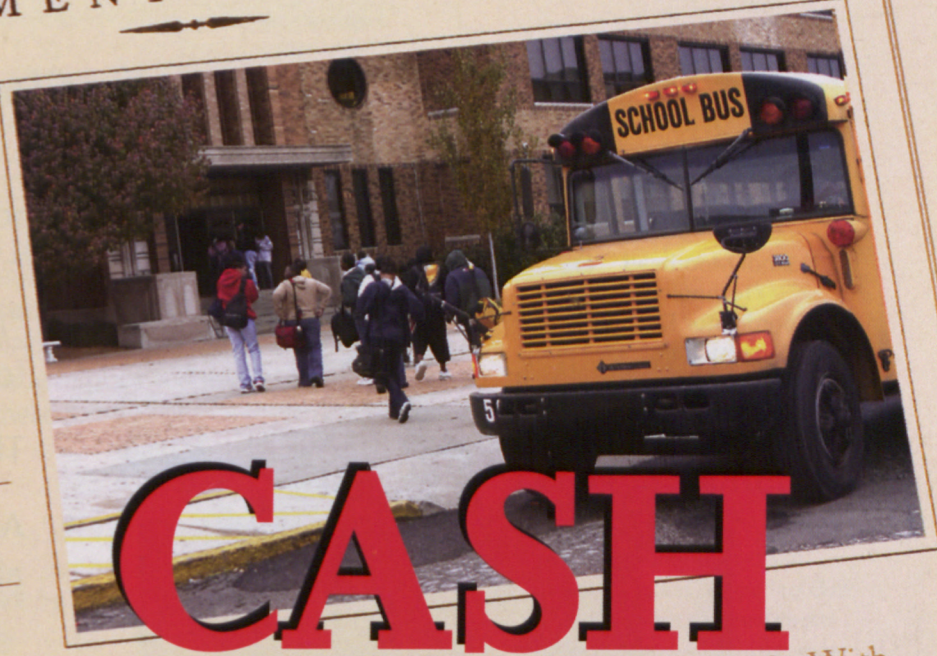
TOTAL WORTH:
$393 Billion

VENDOR ACCOUNTABILITY:
None

QUALITY CONTROLS:
Minimal

INVESTMENT BONUS:
Vouchers

ADVISOR COMMENTS:
The privatization of educatio... huge ... profit. With the enactment of No Child ... Behind ... ools a... for ... picking. There has never been another opp... ... take advan- ... nd get in on the action early. An added bonus is vouchers. ... slow and ...



CASH COW

As companies vie for a larger share of the education 'industry,' educators and kids pay the price.

PAGE 20

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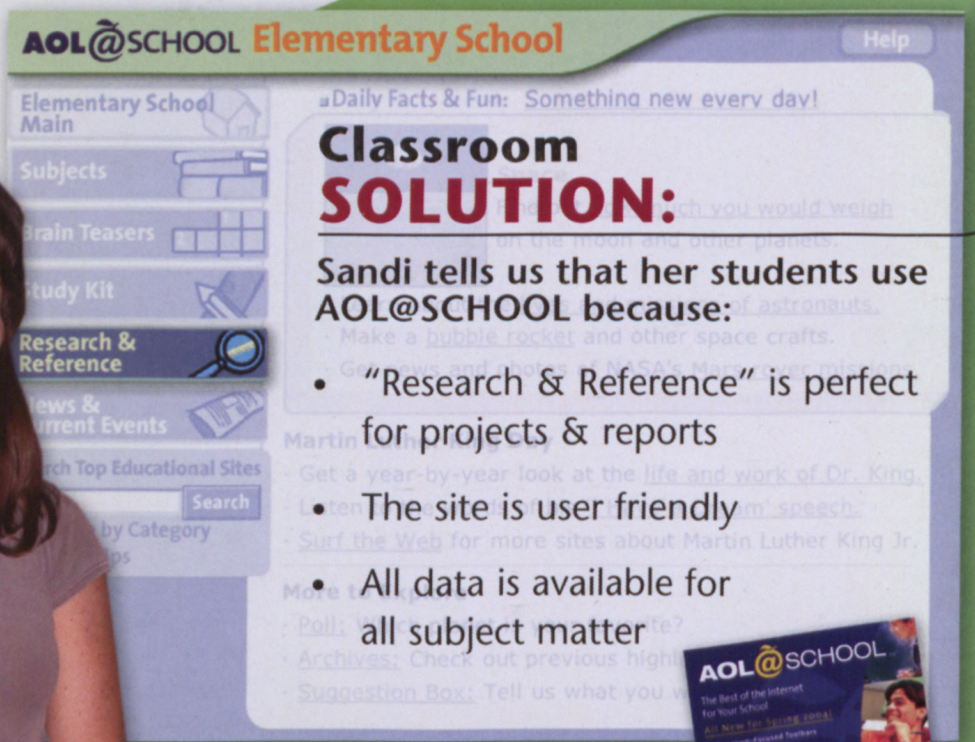
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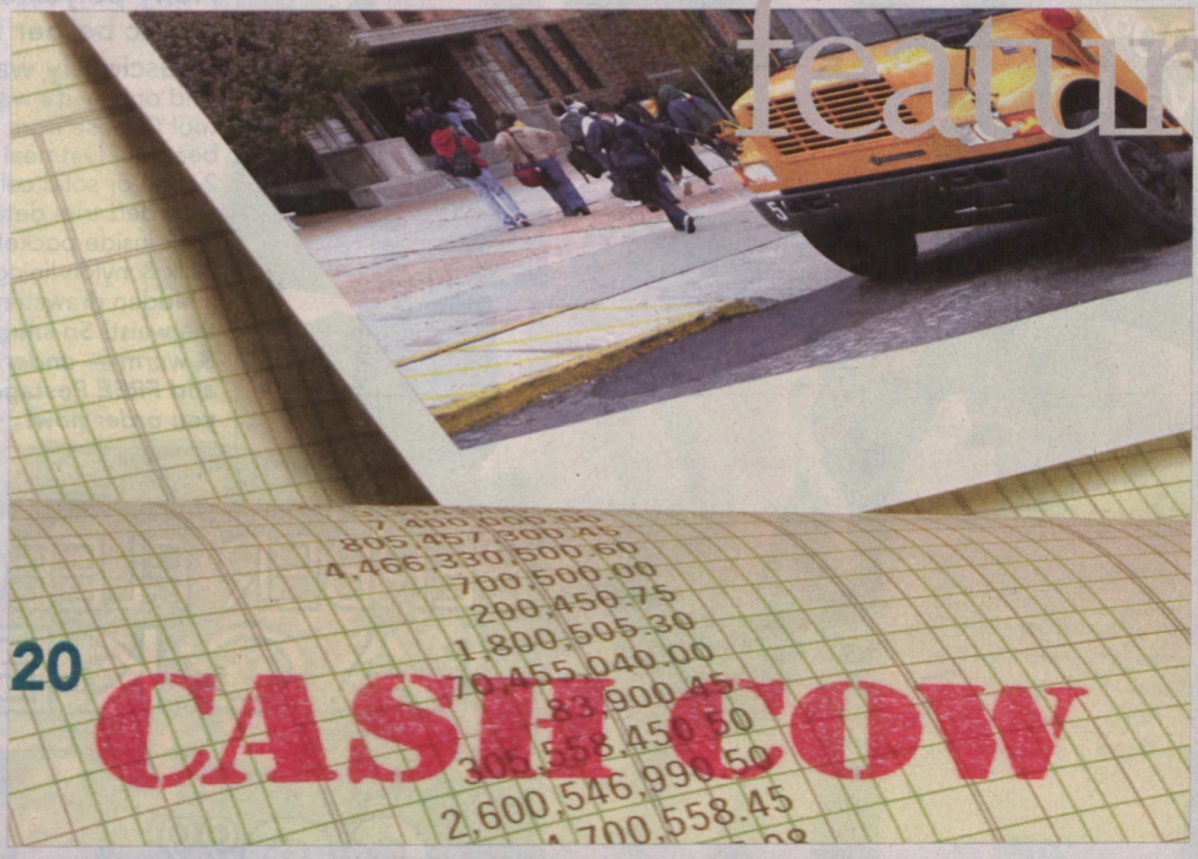
features



COVER **20**

CASH COW

The $393 billion public education "industry" is becoming increasingly lucrative for private companies, which are now landing contracts for everything from cafeteria and tutoring services to full management of schools. Meanwhile, voucher plans continue to get a toehold in more and more districts. Who's benefiting as these public monies flow into private hands? Not kids.

TECHNOLOGY

Bye Bye Blackboard 30

Tired of screeching chalk and dust-covered clothing? Such teaching hazards are becoming a thing of the past as schools send traditional classroom tools the way of fountain pens and dunce caps.

YOUR DESK

It's a Teacher Thing 32

Where else does Disney meet Shakespeare and Tim the Tool Guy? *NEA Today* sent a team of investigators to discover the real purpose behind those zany belongings that find comfort on a teacher's desk.

CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT

John Kerry on Public Schools 34

What will NEA's pick for President do for public education? John Kerry lays out his plan to NEA President Reg Weaver.

PHOTO, TOP: DANNY PECK/PECK STUDIOS; SMALL PHOTOS, LEFT: SCOTT SUCHMAN; RIGHT TOP: DANNY PECK/PECK STUDIOS; RIGHT BOTTOM: SHARON FARMER

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ESP

From 'Just a Para' to Para*professional* 37

Minnesota paraeducators opt for "strength and knowledge" by joining the merged NEA-AFT state affiliate.

NEAFT

Union Power on Campus 39

K–12 educators aren't the only ones fighting assaults on public education, as higher ed members in Washington State show with their votes.

HEALTH & FITNESS

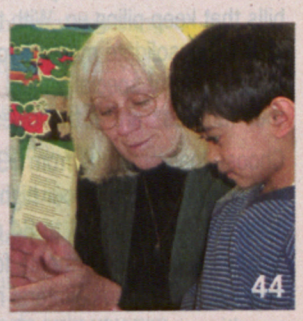
Meet the Winners! 42

Here they are! They've strutted and strolled through miles of hallway and track; trimmed and slimmed to take the top NEA Fitness Challenge prizes home to their schools. Competing in their own unique ways—walking, workout tapes, gym routines—hundreds of members participated in the NEA Fitness Challenge, the organization's first initiative to help you get in shape.

PEOPLE

Teacher of the Year, ESP of the Year 44

Meet Teacher of the Year Kathleen Mellor (right), who started a successful program for ESL students, and ESP of the Year Sunny Story, a paraeducator who made an incredible career helping troubled children.



LAST BELL

Ready, Set, Go! 64

She may not have all the answers as she begins her new teaching career, but Rhonda Lewis says she's psyched and ready for showtime.

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COVER PHOTO: DANNY PECK/PECK STUDIOS
SMALL PHOTOS THIS PAGE FROM TOP: JANET HOSTETTER; KIM HUGHES; KIM WALKER; NATIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR PROGRAM; STEVE LEWIS

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$15,000	$690	$476	$369	$305	$263	$233
$25,000	N/A	$792	$615	$508	$438	$388

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Possibilities

In seventh grade I had an English teacher, Mr. Moore, who bore a striking resemblance to the legendary singer Isaac Hayes, of "Shaft" fame. His head was clean-shaven, he wore a beard, and he had a cool, confident walk that elicited a "right on" from the gangly adolescents he taught. ¶ Unlike Isaac Hayes, though, Mr. Moore was no crooner. But in 1971 he could play a mean jazz flute. And he did—at least three mornings a week, right at his desk before the start of school. We'd stumble into class, loud and antsy, and Mr. Moore, legs crossed, head tilted, would be doing his improvisational thing. Instantly, we'd fall into an awestruck hush. How, we wondered, could a *teacher*—a guy who also wrote poetry, who seemed to know dead authors personally, who could actually get us pumped about diagramming a sentence—be, well, this too? ¶ I've since come to understand that letting us in on the impassioned pieces of his eclectic life was Mr. Moore's well-honed gift to us. It was about showing us the possibilities in our own lives. Prepositions and antecedents, jazz and books—it was *all* "right on." ¶ I was reminded of Mr. Moore when I began thinking of how you, our educators, start each school year with a whole cast of ideas aimed at helping kids see the possibilities. It's not easy, making it happen, because it entails more than "just" teaching math or driving a bus or cooking lunch for the 12:45 shift. It's about role modeling, unearthing buried will, creatively playing the music of promise. ¶ Unfortunately, these are the intangibles that are increasingly at stake as private companies get a toehold into the workings of our schools. As our cover story about profit-making in public education shows ("Cash Cow," page 20), some things just can't be contracted out—at least not without a price to students. ¶ We at *NEA Today* understand this, and as the school year begins, we tip our pens to you, the ones who've set the standard for giving more than the "job" requires. You've entered the school door once again, having prepared your lessons, cleared your desks (or not; see "It's a Teacher Thing," page 32); and in the spirit of Mr. Moore, readied the music only you can sing. Now do us the honor and keep us posted on the results—your challenges, your successes. ¶ We'll be here all year, listening.

Marilyn Milloy

EDITOR MARILYN MILLOY

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EXECUTIVE EDITOR AND PUBLISHER
Leona Hiraoka

EDITOR
Marilyn Milloy

MANAGER, MANUFACTURING AND PRODUCTION
Bill Fischer

SECTION EDITORS
Mary Ellen Flannery mflannery@nea.org
Sabrina Holcomb sholcomb@nea.org
Alain Jehlen ajehlen@nea.org
Kristen Loschert kloschert@nea.org
John O'Neil joneil@nea.org
Dave Winans dwinans@nea.org

SENIOR COPY EDITOR
Michelle Chovan

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
Marsha Blackburn

PRODUCTION
Christian Lopez, Alice Trued

ART DIRECTION
Groff Creative, Inc.

ADVERTISING SALES
Rich Datz rdatz@educationworld.com
856/983-7199

ADVERTISING COORDINATOR
Branita Griffin Henson

CONTRIBUTING WRITER
Sheree Crute

EDITORIAL INTERNS
Donna Chiu, Emily Goodman, Chris Kotterman

We are interested in hearing your feedback: BY MAIL: *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036 BY E-MAIL: neatoday@nea.org BY FAX: 202/822-7206

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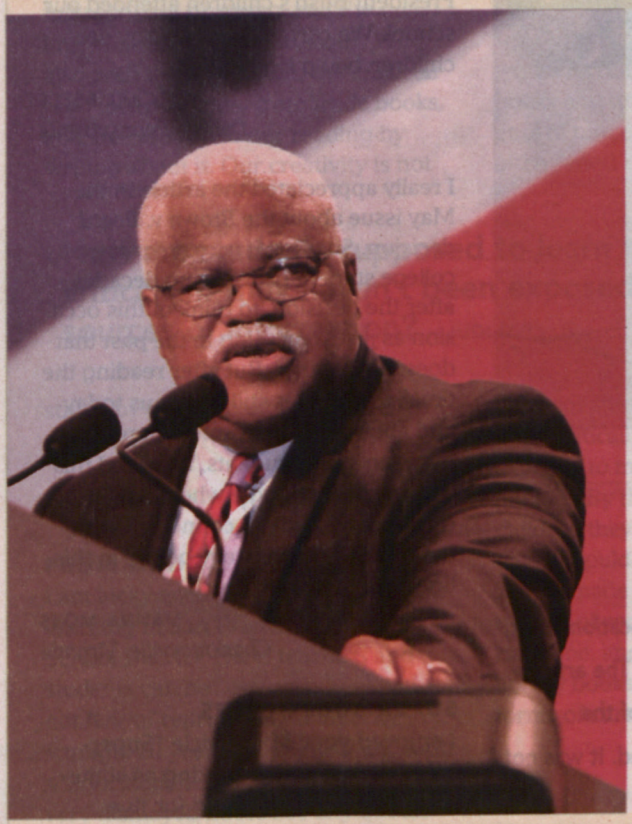
'Of Educators, By Educators, For Educators and Public Education'

Under the banner of "Uniting the Nation for Great Public Schools," more than 9,000 members of Team NEA gathered in our nation's capital on our nation's birthday. The 2004 Representative Assembly was energizing, invigorating, and helped focus priorities. Most important, it underscored the strength of our resolve and revealed what sets NEA apart.



"We're led not by outsiders, but by professional educators who have devoted their own careers to furthering NEA's fundamental goal: ensuring that every child has access to a quality public education."

—REG WEAVER

NEA is an organization of educators, run by educators, advocating for educators and public education. Yet self-interest is not our guiding principle. Our life's work is developing the minds and characters of those to whom we entrust our nation's future: the children of America.

Our positions on the issues are grounded in real-life experience.

We're led not by outsiders, but by professional educators who have devoted their own careers to furthering NEA's fundamental goal: ensuring that every child has access to a quality public education.

Ivory-tower ideologues sometimes act as though that were not the case, praising teachers while scornfully deriding NEA. Their commentary often demonstrates an ignorance of who we are, and how NEA sets policy. Our Representative Assembly, the largest democratic deliberative body in the world, determines our positions in purely democratic fashion: one delegate, one vote.

This year, we are focused on four priorities:

• First, to elect friends of public education at the state and local level, as well as to Congress and the White House. For President, NEA is recommending John Kerry. Other recommendations will be for Republicans as well as Democrats. The primary criterion is that they share our commitment to making public schools great for every child.

• Second, we need to fix and fund the so-called No Child Left Behind act. The law attempts to set the right goals: a qualified teacher in every classroom, standards and accountability, and high expectations for every child. But we can't realize those goals without amending the implementation plan, and providing adequate resources. Under this Administration, the gap between what the law promises and what it delivers grows ever wider.

• Third, we must act to close the gap in achievement between racial and ethnic minorities and the white majority. There's no silver bullet, no single solution to this complex problem. But as educators, we know the solution must include a commitment to ensuring early childhood education, smaller classes, attracting highly qualified teachers to low-performing schools, and parental involvement.

• Fourth, we need to not only energize but build our membership. In numbers there is influence. NEA has 2.7 million members. That's roughly 1 in every 10 Americans. Yet, it has proved not to be enough to effectively raise our recommendations on relieving the plight of children and public education to the pinnacle of public and political consciousness. If each of us signed up just one new member, that influence would double. Think what that would mean!

We continually say that our children are our living legacy. Public education is the best investment we can make in their future.

Thank you for being a member of Team NEA. Have a great year and know that I appreciate the efforts and involvement of each and every one of you as you work to make great public schools for every child!

NEA PRESIDENT REG WEAVER

PHOTO: SANDY SCHAEFFER

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Remembering the joy (and horror) of prom night p32
Substitute teachers: how to get the good ones p35
MAY 2004
neatoday
The Magazine of the National Education Association
BROWN v. BOARD
Educators reflect on 50 years of progress —and struggle— since the historic ruling

HONORING BROWN'S LEGACY

The article on the 50th anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling (cover story, May) was profound, just as the decision itself was. The article provided a detailed background of the case and a description of the educational system in America after the Court's ruling. It was not biased. It was not condescending, but rather irrefutably honest.

As a young Black male college student, I have been affected by the decision in a positive manner. The ruling has enabled me to pursue more diverse educational opportunities. Education is a vital tool required to succeed in life. And I am honored that the decision has given me the versatility to be a part of such a diverse educational environment.

It is important that we continue to commemorate this momentous decision. By commemorating the anniversary, we can embrace the past and continue to prepare well-rounded students.

WILLIE ALLEN
Tifton, Georgia

Reading the *Brown v. Board* article made me think of the parallels to my situation as a deaf professional teaching in a school for deaf students. The majority of the hearing staff do not fully understand—linguistically or culturally—the deaf students we teach or the deaf professionals employed at our school. Teachers require additional training for American Sign Language, cultural sensitivity, and current best practices in educating deaf students, but many times the school cannot afford to compensate teachers for training time outside of the regular work day. Thus, they continue to teach in ways that are often outdated and ineffective.

I wonder what would happen if President Bush's children attended our school. We certainly have many deaf children being left behind.

CARL FRELS
Dalton, Pennsylvania

I really appreciated the article in the May issue about the *Brown v. Board* decision. So often it is easy for me, as a college student growing up decades after the decision, to think of this occasion as just something in the past that doesn't affect me. But after reading the timeline of issues still facing us today and about the achievement gap between some students, I realized this still will be a struggle when I am in the classroom. I had not connected with the *Brown v. Board* story before in this light. Thank you so much.

LIANNA MOSS
Charlottesville, Virginia

SUPER SUBSTITUTES

I enjoyed your May article "Super-subs" (Spotlight). Speaking as someone who has substituted for five years, I want to emphasize the importance of school secretaries to people like me. Secretaries are usually a sub's first contact with a school, on the phone and in person. I greatly appreciate receiving a friendly greeting, school map, directions about using the school's phone system, and an offer to help. Often I am personally escorted to the classroom as well.

Teachers also should know that having a seating chart is essential. Discipline is much easier when I can call students by name. It also helps if the

teacher designates a reliable student as a "technical advisor" to assist with any audio-visual equipment needed for the day's lesson. "Show the movie" is not always the easiest lesson plan.

DOROTHY CLORE
Alden, Michigan

DIRECT INSTRUCTION

I'm writing about your article "Ready to Read" (UpFront, May). There are many teachers who are exceedingly creative and still use scripted instruction. My school has gone through numerous basal anthologies and various phonics programs, none of which taught ALL our children to read. We are now using a Direct Instruction, fully scripted program, and the improvements are miraculous. We also read to the children, the children read independently from trade books, and we respond to our reading by writing about it. Our creativity is not stifled by the scripted lesson. It is enhanced as a result of it.

JEANNIE HINYARD
Roswell, New Mexico

PROM NIGHTMARE

I am lucky enough to be a gay teacher teaching in San Francisco Unified School District. Here, teachers and students can be "out" at school without fear of reprisal. I was unlucky enough, 20 years ago, to be a gay high school student in Canton, Ohio. I was very dismayed not to see any quotes from gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered teachers in your May 2004 prom story "Dream or Nightmare?" My own story was truly a nightmare.

Although I knew I was gay, I asked my good friend Connie to go with me to prom. Afterward, we attended a party thrown by some of the "popular" kids where we were threatened and kicked out. Some of the guys even chased us all over town.

I expect to see a heterosexist slant in the media, but not in a magazine published by NEA.

Your Dilemma question "What do you do when students show physical affection for each other in school?" did not include any examples of gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered students either.

STEVEN FIDEL HERRAIZ
San Francisco, California

Editor's Note: The prom stories and Dilemma answers were gathered solely from readers who responded to the call to write in. *NEA Today* welcomes such feedback from all members.

QUALITY RESOURCES

Reg Weaver's May column (President's Viewpoint) states, "we must continue to fight for...up-to-date books in the classroom." In California, it is likely schools will receive block grants that would force them to pay for library books and textbooks from the same pool of money. We all know textbooks often reflect only one point of view.

How are students supposed to learn to think critically if they haven't been exposed to multiple sources of information? —JUDI HIRSCH

How are students supposed to learn to think critically if they haven't been exposed to multiple sources of information? By the time textbooks reach children they are, by necessity, out of date. I would rather see textbooks simply made available to students, instead of requiring that each student have one, and supplement them with library books, newspapers, and other forms of current communication.

JUDI HIRSCH
Oakland, California

'...UNDER GOD...'

I was very disappointed to read that NEA supports keeping the words "under God" in the pledge (Rights Watch, April). As teachers, we are required to lead the pledge daily. Doesn't this violate the rights of a teacher who is agnostic or atheist? Is it right to make a child in a classroom feel badly because he or she is different from the majority?

Even though the majority of Americans support keeping "under God" in the pledge, it still doesn't make it right. In fact, it is the responsibility of the majority in this country to protect the views of those in the minority. Imagine what our nation would be like if we did not protect those rights.

CARMEN ANDREWS-SÁNCHEZ
Henderson, Nevada

As an American, Careen Jennings, the teacher who wrote that she is an atheist, should not have had to hide her beliefs (Letters, May). She has a right to her beliefs, just as I have the right to mine. She certainly shouldn't have faced the loss of a career because of them. Perhaps some of us have forgotten that freedom of religion, which I take to mean the right to choose no religion, is one of our basic rights.

I remember when the words "under God" were inserted into the Pledge of Allegiance. Were we less patriotic before they were inserted or less religious? Take them out, leave them in, it makes no difference to me. I will continue to believe in God, and in my country, either way.

SHARON HEAD
DeSoto, Missouri

IN THE LOOP

I read with great interest your April 2004 article on looping ("We're Baaack!")—because I'm living it! Along with my teaching team colleagues and our 85 kids, I am completing our two-year (grades seven and eight) loop together. It's been a learning experience with bumps, bruises, and missteps, but overall I can't imagine a better way to teach and reach kids. I can't wait to start the cycle again in September.

JEANNE SHUMWAY
Amherst, Massachusetts

LET'S TALK

Share your ideas, comments, and opinions with *NEA Today* in one of four ways:

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Letters are edited for length and clarity.

upfront

Trends
Facts
Innovators
Wisdom
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First 5
News
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Humor

Home Stretch?

It's taken two-and-a-half years, but a reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is in sight. The Senate finally approved a bill reauthorizing the landmark 1975 act, which guarantees educational services to more than 6 million children with disabilities. That means it's on to a House-Senate conference committee, which will reconcile the differences between the House and Senate proposals and draft legislation to present to the full Congress. (The House approved a bill reauthorizing IDEA last year.)

SO HOW DID WE FARE? On the upside, the bill protects services for transient students, implements a 15-state paperwork reduction project, provides for enhanced professional development, and calls for a study on how environmental factors impact children's developmental disabilities.

But the Senate bill is not without flaws. Most notably, the Senate failed to pass an amendment to fully fund IDEA over the next six years. Currently, Congress covers roughly 20 percent of the costs to educate special needs students, just half of the 40 percent committed in the original law. That shortfall has cost local schools and taxpayers more than $300 million during the past 29 years. (To see the impact on your state, visit www.nea.org/lac/idea/fy05ideafunding.html.) Much work still remains on clarifying the definition of a "highly qualified" special education teacher as well.

Want more? Join NEA's activist list by e-mailing pralabate@nea.org. You also can keep up with the latest developments and contact your congressional reps by visiting www.nea.org/lac/idea.

Weighty Matters

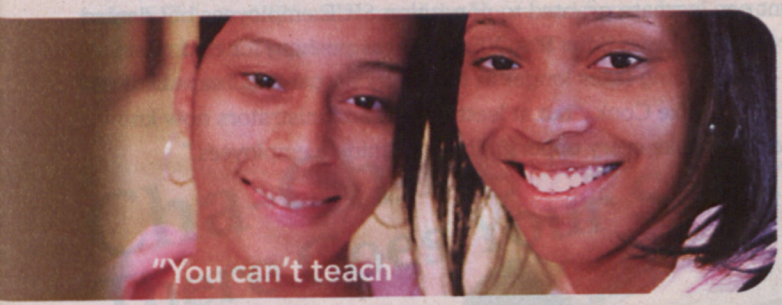
The percentage of overweight children and teens in the United States has more than doubled during the past three decades, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. More than 15 percent of children ages 6–11 are overweight, compared with just 6.5 percent in the late 1970s. Meanwhile, 15.5 percent of 12- to 19-year-olds are overweight, compared with just 5 percent 30 years ago.

PHOTOS TOP: PHOTODISC, DONOVAN REESE; BOTTOM: IT STOCK FREE

Get That Party Started!

How can you build grassroots power for the public schools and have a fabulous time doing it? Easy—You can host, or just attend, one of the thousands of house parties that NEA and several other pro-public education groups are organizing on September 22.

YOU'LL GET TO KNOW fellow supporters of public education—educators, parents, and other good people from the neighborhood. Will there be good food, frolic, and fellowship? Definitely! And by the end, your community will have a new group of activists ready and able to make themselves heard by local, state, and national leaders whenever they take up key issues around public education. Politicians do listen to people—when there are enough of them. The groups launching this effort with NEA include MoveOn.org, ACORN, and the Campaign for America's Future. Go to www.greatpublicschools.org to find a house party in your community or how to host one (and the resources available to get your party jumpin'). See you there!



"You can't teach your children to fight for what you believe in if you don't do it yourself."

Two Tickets, Please

SHERRELL INGRAM JUST WANTED to go to the prom with her best friend, a female student from another school. But, when Ingram, a student at Lago Vista High School in Texas, tried to buy a couples ticket, she found out about a new rule: Your date must be the opposite sex. It wasn't even a district rule, just the whim of the principal. That's when her mom, Ginger White, decided to take a stand.

"You can't teach your children to fight for what you believe in if you don't do it yourself," says White, who sought counsel with the People for the American Way Foundation. PFAWF contacted the principal and asked her to rescind the discriminatory policy to avoid legal action. The school ultimately complied, but White remains on alert. "I'm afraid they'll go to the school board and make it a school rule. But I'm watching the news every day. Watching and reading."

PHOTO TOP: BRIAN HAGIWARA; BOTTOM: NATHAN HAM

Capitol Report

Good News for Retirees

New bills introduced in Congress mark an important first step toward the eventual full repeal of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).

The WEP unfairly shortchanges teachers and ESPs who have paid into Social Security during their careers but who then retire and receive a pension from a job not covered by Social Security.

The bipartisan "Public Servant Protection Act" (H.R. 4391/S. 2455) creates a new formula to calculate Social Security benefits for these individuals and increases benefits for many of them.

A House subcommittee held a hearing on the new bill in July. Terry Hickman, president of the Nevada State Education Association, told lawmakers, "I get calls every week from members devastated by the news that they will lose the Social Security benefits they had counted on for retirement." The new bill, he added, was "a critical first step toward repeal of both offsets."

A mark-up on the bill in the House is expected soon. (For the latest on GPO and WEP, go to www.nea.org/lac/socsec.)

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Free Speech On Campus!

The "Policies and Procedures on Demonstrations" for Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) warmly embrace the "free expression of ideas." But apparently, that free expression applies only to university administrators and not to NEA members.

MEMBERS OF THE SIUE Professional Staff Association planned to express themselves last winter by picketing a university trustee board meeting, an accepted bargaining tactic since 1998. But SIUE Human Resources Director A.G. Monaco denied permission stating the local Association was not a "University-sponsored organization." The Illinois Education Association-NEA (IEA-NEA) immediately sought legal relief from the ban. On the day before the planned union action, a federal district court judge upheld the right of the union members to picket outside the meeting.

The next frigid day, IEA-NEA members picketed without incident and even addressed trustees about their top concern: a 2 percent pay increase granted to non-union SIUE employees but denied to them. At press time, IEA-NEA still was pushing for that raise.

"Everything takes longer in university bargaining," says UniServ Director Mike Cook, "but at least certain administrators now know they can't take every opportunity to intimidate employees."

You've Got College

For generations, expectant high school seniors have dashed to their mailboxes looking for "the envelope," bulky with promise or despairingly thin, that traditionally signaled acceptance (or rejection) to college. But today's teens may be better off sticking close to their computers for the big news.

PERHAPS AS MANY AS one-third of colleges and universities currently notify prospective students of their status by e-mail or through secure Web sites, estimates Barmak Nassirian, an official with the Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, who describes the trend as "becoming increasingly ubiquitous."

Still, privacy concerns and the high cost of implementing a secure system have caused many schools to resist the trend. Others simply find the approach too impersonal for communicating information of such consequence.

But the students don't seem to mind. "It's been well received," observes John Reider of the National Association of College Admission Counselors. "And believe me, if it wasn't, colleges who are very customer sensitive wouldn't do it."

PHOTO TOP: DIGITAL VISION; BOTTOM: ADAM CROWLEY

More Than a Test Score

By now, you've probably seen whether your school made Adequate Yearly Progress last year under the revised Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (or you'll find out soon). And, if you work at one of the many schools that missed the mark, take heart. The mark isn't all it's cracked up to be.

JUDGING SCHOOLS solely on the percentage of students who pass a single test each year does not accurately reflect a school's performance—something NEA has claimed all along. But now the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), a nonprofit assessment group, and the National Center for Fair and Open Testing (FairTest) are sounding the call in two reports released recently.

By expecting all schools to meet the same standard in the same time frame, ESEA does not recognize student progress along the way, which, NWEA claims, better indicates whether a school "is maximizing student potential, or merely maintaining the status quo." Instead, accountability systems should evaluate student learning in multiple ways that give students feedback about their performance, according to FairTest.

Fortunately, Congress has taken note, introducing 20 NEA-supported bills to address concerns about funding, sanctions, student transfers, and teacher quality, among other topics, under ESEA. And 170 members of the House and Senate have co-sponsored these efforts. Is your member of Congress among them? Check out the list of bills at www.nea.org/lac/esea/03nclb.html and find out.

Cha-Ching There Goes Your Salary

Monday's lesson on juicy words may have cost $20—but it was a hit: the kids devoured those gummy worms. Wednesday's crystal gardens took another $10 out of your pocketbook, even if parents did donate the aluminum pie plates. Then ice cream on Friday for the darlings who sat in their seats, politely raised their hands, and kept their feet to themselves added up to (a very well-spent) $15.

IF ONLY THAT WAS IT! But you couldn't help but order a $30 denim beanbag chair for the reading corner. And how could you NOT buy the on-sale $22 winter jacket when you know there are at least three kids in your class who shiver on their walk to school?

But it adds up, doesn't it? When you look at your bank account, you find yourself looking twice at the help-wanted sign at Barnes & Noble.

So what do you spend on classroom supplies and goodies? Participate in *NEA Today's* **ONLINE SURVEY** at **WWW.NEA.ORG/NEATODAYEXTRA** and let us know by September 15.

PHOTO TOP: PHOTODISC. PHOTO BOTTOM: RYAN MCVAY

Global Takes

Sex Ed in China

On the Chinese island of Hainan, an enterprising 17-year-old boy sent 800 questionnaires about sex education to his schoolmates, parents, and doctors. The results: 75 percent of the teenagers said they learned about sex from pornography, according to *China Daily*. But many teens added that the government should clamp down on the industry. And 90 percent want schools to offer sex ed. The young researcher, Wu Jie, said he was lucky enough to have a father who taught him about sex; but his survey found 90 percent of parents avoid the topic.

Educating All Children

During the last 10 years, the percentage of children attending primary school in the African country of Swaziland has plunged from 90 to 70 percent, and AIDS is the primary culprit, according to a report from a United Nations-affiliated news service. When a parent dies from the disease, many families can no longer afford to send their children to school. And some teachers believe educating these children simply isn't a government priority. So, the Swaziland teachers' union is spearheading a campaign to provide free, quality education to all.

Got something to say?

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Driving Forces

When bus driver Julie Ely started working for East Allen, Indiana, County Schools more than 10 years ago, the words ESPs and professional development rarely made it into the same sentence.

Bus drivers **Julie Ely** and **Mark Smith** help newbies find their way with a mentoring program designed for ESPs.

"I WAS BASICALLY TAUGHT how to drive the bus," she says.

But Ely and fellow driver Mark Smith wanted something better for the drivers who followed in their footsteps. So, three years ago they started a mentoring program to connect new and substitute drivers with their more experienced colleagues.

In addition to weekly or biweekly conversations with their mentors, new drivers attend four sessions during the school year on child development and behavior. The workshops arm drivers with techniques, similar to those used in the classroom, to manage their students. Since the program's inception, formal discipline referrals have decreased 15 percent and fewer drivers have left the district, Smith says. Most importantly, drivers now have a venue where they can ask questions and get advice.

"The mentor program is about building relationships," says Ely. "The drivers feel like they have backing in what they do now. It's a support system."

Share Your Tips

Do you have a good strategy for preventing student misbehavior on the school bus? E-mail it to joneil@nea.org by October 1, and we'll publish selected tips in an upcoming issue of *NEA Today*.

BOOK FOCUS

Why Good Girls Go Bad

The image of women as catty and vicious is age old and continues to turn up—even in television characters. These images concerned Lyn Mikel Brown, a women's studies professor at Colby College in Maine, so she decided to find out why girls act the way they do.

Brown analyzed interviews and focus groups with 421 girls in grades 1–12. The study led to her book, *Girlfighting: Betrayal and Rejection Among Girls* (New York University Press, 2003). Brown found that in today's still-sexist climate, "it is simply easier and safer and ultimately more profitable for girls to take out their fears and anxieties on other girls rather than on boys or on a culture that denigrates, idealizes, or eroticizes qualities associated with being feminine."

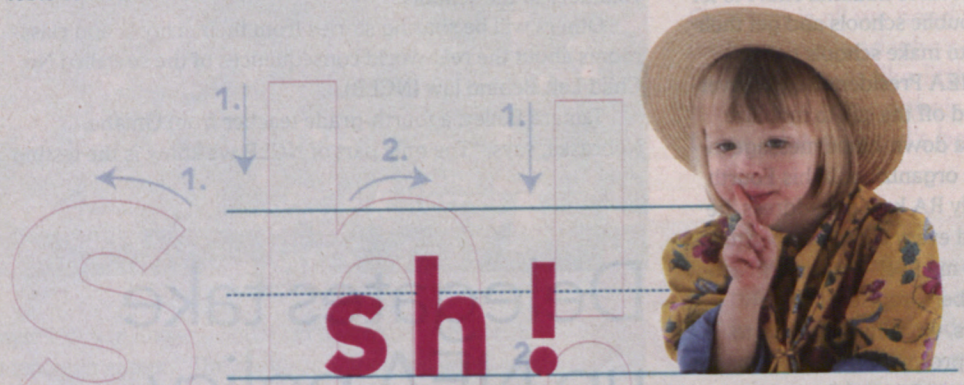
During her research, Brown discovered three key areas where adolescent girls project their anxieties and pain onto others: sexuality (too much or too little), attitude (too "full of themselves"), and appearance/body image (fitting the media's ideals and gaining the attention of boys).

What to do? Schools should encourage various ways for girls to demonstrate positive attributes, such as through sports, social activism, and in "safe places" for sharing ideas and feelings. "We're going to have to help girls figure out how to negotiate their power," says Brown.

PHOTOS TOP: TOM STRICKLAND PHOTOGRAPHY; BOTTOM: NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS

No More Test Stress

ASPIRING TEACHERS in Virginia can breathe a little easier now that they have an alternative to taking Praxis I, the basic skills test necessary for entering many teacher education programs. Students who score at least an 1100 on their SAT (and at least 530 on both the math and verbal sections) can bypass the test. That's good news for new teachers, since Virginia requires the highest Praxis passing score in the nation. "We think this is a very good thing," says Betty Lambdin, director of instruction and professional development for the Virginia Education Association. Connecticut, Delaware, and Georgia have similar policies, she added. Students still must pass Praxis II, though, to receive a state teaching license. Thirty-five states use the Praxis Series tests to license teachers.



Little Voices

Smile

Teaching the alphabet to preschoolers is rewarding and sometimes surprising. During a field trip to a local outdoor mall, I reminded my four-year-old students to stay together and to talk in quiet voices. One of my preschoolers turned to the other children and said, in a pitch every teacher would appreciate, **"YES, TALK IN A LOWER-CASE VOICE!"**

—EVIE SAFRAN
preschool teacher
Charlottesville, Virginia

→ ***Have a funny school story you'd like to share?*** *Send it to neatoday@nea.org or through the Web at www.nea.org/neatoday.*

Two-Minute Tips

Open House Project

During the first few days of school, I take pictures of each student standing in front of a giant tape in the shape of a ruler. I get double sets of prints and mount one set next to student work displayed on the bulletin board. I save the second set of photos for our spring open house. I take a new set of photos at the end of the school year and then distribute the end-of-year and beginning-of-the-year pictures to the students. The students then make folders that include both photos and essays about how they have grown both physically and academically during the school year.

—SUE KAST
Pleasanton, California

Restroom Breaks

My kindergarten children are still learning to raise their hands to speak, so I wanted a different, yet quiet, signal for those who need to use the restroom. I have my students raise a hand with the pointer finger up if they need a restroom break. I know immediately what the student needs and can simply point back at that child to acknowledge him or her without interrupting my teaching.

—ANN EBERT
Oostburg, Wisconsin

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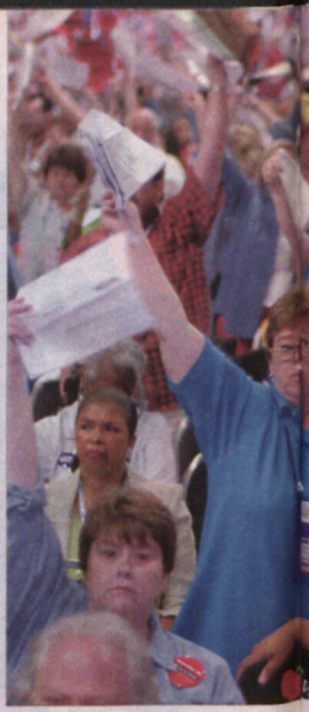
PHOTO TOP: CORBIS; BOTTOM: NICOLE SUTTON

Fighting Back With Action

In a critical presidential election year, more than 9,000 delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly began showing what it really means to flex their political muscle.



From writing elected officials to fund-raising for friends of education, delegates at this year's Annual Meeting and Representative Assembly (RA) showed they know how to do "activism" right. Preparing for one of the most important political seasons in the Association's history, thousands heeded the call to mobilize before even leaving Washington, D.C.

They put their enthusiastic stamp of approval on John Kerry's bid for President, and they signed up in droves to host house parties in September, part of NEA's national effort to let people know what's happening in public schools and get their help to make schools better.

NEA President Reg Weaver kicked off the call to mobilize with a down-home message in basic organizing. In his Fourth of July RA keynote address, he urged every NEA member to "give me five!"— recruit five new members, register five new voters, work five full days to elect pro-public education candidates, and spend five minutes explaining to a parent or community member what needs to be done to raise student achievement for all children in the nation's public schools.

"TEAM NEA, we are the foot soldiers of democracy's foundation—and we're on the move."

—NEA PRESIDENT REG WEAVER

"Team NEA," he roared, "we are the foot soldiers of democracy's foundation—and we're on the move."

Delegates proved he was right.

On September 22, NEA members, such as Marion Perry of Franklin, Indiana, said they will be hosting parties in libraries, veterans' posts, churches, public parks, schools—and hundreds of living rooms. The invitees will be educators, family members, neighbors, and anyone else with an interest in public education.

For her part, Perry, an English teacher, plans to invite local officials, church ministers, parents, the mayor, and the local newspaper editor. "Many of our officials send their kids to private schools," she says. "When they hear 'private,' a lot of people think that's the best. We need to tell them about the good things happening in our public schools and why that's where we need to invest." She thinks her party can lead to better newspaper coverage and persuade more parents to volunteer in the schools.

Others will be sharing stories from their schools and classrooms about the real-world consequences of the so-called No Child Left Behind law (NCLB).

Tamara Bailey, a fourth-grade teacher from Omaha, Nebraska, says, "The only part of NCLB we know is the testing

Delegates take up NEA policy, plot course for activist year

During four days of business, RA delegates set a yearlong course for an organization of 2.7 million preK–graduate school employees, retired educators, and Student Program members. Here's a snapshot of some of the big issues tackled.

TEACHER QUALITY. Delegates gave an enthusiastic boost to the Association's teacher quality agenda. They unanimously approved a new business item that puts NEA on record as opposing federal funding for the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE), an organization that wants all states to offer a teaching credential to anyone who can pass a computer-based test and federal background check.

At a briefing for delegates, John Wilson, NEA executive director, said ABCTE's agenda sends the wrong message to parents,

PHOTOS BY CHARLES VOTAW AND NICK CRETTIER

part—and that's the part that stresses us out. They give us memos that say, 'Don't teach to the test,' but then they tell us to teach the standards on the test and we really don't have any time in the school year to teach anything else!"

Delegates did more than compare notes with each other about this flawed legislation. Over the course of the six-day meeting, they sent more than 9,000 e-mails to Congress and state legislators, urging support for revisions to NCLB—and expressing concern about other issues such as IDEA, Social Security offset provisions, affordable prescription drugs, higher education, and the Patriot Act. And they raised almost $1.3 million in voluntary contributions to the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, which is used to support efforts to elect candidates who support children and public education.

As always, members found fun and imaginative ways to raise money for political action. One of this year's most popular fund-raising items was a CD recorded by NEA Secretary-Treasurer Lily Eskelsen entitled, *No Child's Behind Left and Other Random Acts of Music*. Eskelsen teased the delegates with a taste of the CD, singing her "Ode to Adequate Yearly Progress," part of which goes like this:

One test is all we need to know about
who's above and who's below...
Drill those kids like little robots...
If we have to test their butts off,
there'll be no child's behind left...

taxpayers, policy makers, and even those students considering a teaching career. "The message is that you don't need any formal preparation to become a teacher," he said. "You don't need to be guided or assessed by experienced educators before you enter a classroom. Everything you need to know about child development, how learning occurs, content knowledge, content-specific pedagogy, and more can be summarized and gauged by a computer-based test. The message is that as long as you have not been convicted of a felony, we welcome you to the teaching profession."

ACHIEVEMENT GAP. The RA adopted a report calling for more study on issues affecting the achievement gap. The report by NEA's Professional Standards and Practices Committee made the point that closing the achievement gap between many students of color and their white peers requires greater support for strategies that boost student achievement. These include smaller class sizes, teacher training, increased parental involvement, enhanced early childhood and after-school services, updated textbooks and materials, and adequate support for children and families outside of school.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY, AND MORE. Delegates amended a policy statement on early childhood education to reinforce the Association's belief that prekindergarten teachers should be fully certified, and they voted to support access to higher education, financial aid, and in-state tuition for undocumented students. Delegates also approved resolutions supporting more accountability for charter schools and stronger anti-bullying policies and programs.

HELP FOR STATE AFFILIATES. Delegates made a commitment to NEA's fight for public education by extending a $5 special dues increase to help state affiliates with ballot measures and legislative crises and to support national and state affiliate media campaigns. In addition, delegates voted to increase the dues support for these efforts by $1 per year for five years.

INSPIRATION. Delegates got it from the speeches of Teacher of the Year Kathleen Mellor, a middle school teacher from North Kingstown, Rhode Island; from ESP of the Year Allyson "Sunny" Story, who works with special needs students in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and from Friend of Education recipient Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund.

LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS. Three members of the NEA Executive Committee were elected. Michael Marks, a high school dramatic arts and debate teacher from Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and Rebecca "Becky" Pringle, a physical science teacher from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, were each re-elected to three-year terms. Mark Cebulski, a social studies teacher from Cedarburg, Wisconsin, was elected to fill a two-year term after being appointed to a one-year term in August 2003.

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Hurry, the next online section begins October 4. Video courses feature open registration. These courses are a convenient way to help fulfill your recertification requirements. To receive your exclusive NEA discount, simply enter NEA75 at the checkout screen when you register online.

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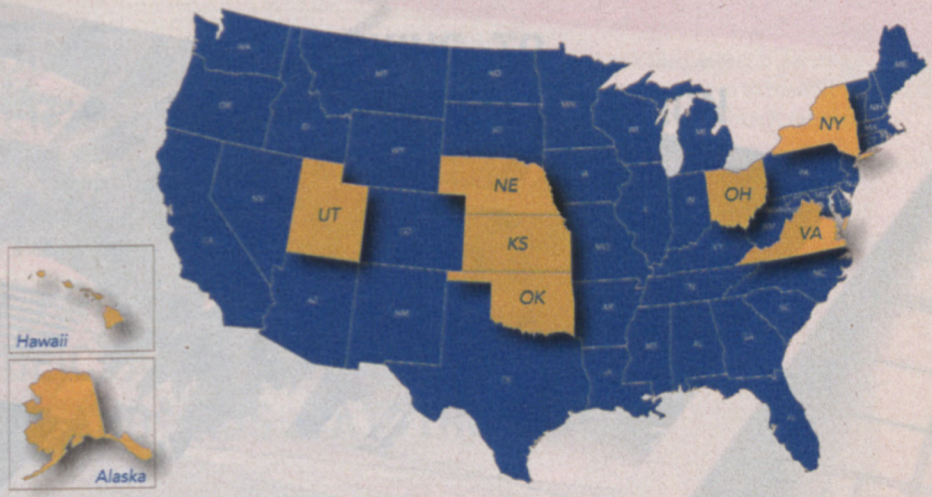
Judge Hits 'Pause' Button

KANSAS After the state legislature adjourned without acting on his order to fix the school funding system, District Judge Terry Bullock ordered Kansas to stop financing all public schools as of June 30, "effectively putting our school system on 'pause' until the unconstitutional funding defects are remedied."

This approach "reflects how seriously Judge Bullock takes this matter that public schools aren't properly funded," says **Kansas NEA** President Christy Levings. "Nothing creates more shock and awe." A shocked state high court has blocked the ruling—for now.



Step Aside, Step Aside

OHIO The Ohio Supreme Court has ruled four times that the state school funding system is unconstitutional, while a survey revealed that 72 percent of Ohio voters believe that the legislature is paying "too little attention" to education finance. To reinforce the point, educators, parents, students, and community folks from nearly 100 school districts rallied at the State House on May 5.

Said speaker Gary Allen, president of the 131,000-member **Ohio Education Association,** "Our bottom line is this: Fix school funding or *step aside* and make room for legislators who want to make a difference in public education."

A Brighter Funding Story

VIRGINIA The **Virginia Education Association's** innovative "Brighter Futures" campaign—focusing research, coalition work, political action, and media/community outreach on school funding needs—is bearing fruit. In May, the state legislature approved a budget that, among other things, boosts school funding by some $1.5 billion over the next biennium, fully funds most state standards, and pays for elementary resource teachers and for middle and secondary school planning time.

For more on the Brighter Futures campaign, go to www.nea.org/neatoday/0201/news12.html.

OK—Feeling Better

OKLAHOMA Beginning this school year, the State of Oklahoma will pay 100 percent of teachers' individual health insurance premiums. Governor Brad Henry signed this right into law in April, marking the end of a journey for **Oklahoma Education Association** members, who lobbied long and hard for the benefit.

C'mon, Stick Around!

HAWAII Salaries have been so low that 10 percent of Hawaii's teachers leave the profession each year. Now **Hawaii State Teachers Association** members, who work for a single, state-run school district, have ratified a contract that will increase pay—depending on salary schedule placement—from 4 percent to 11 percent, with the majority of teachers receiving 7 percent over the next year.

The pact also provides gains in step increases, increases starting pay to $36,486, and boosts the top teacher salary to $66,203.

We're 6,400 ESPs Stronger

UTAH By a 97 percent affirmative vote of its Council of Delegates, the 6,400-member **Utah School Employees Association (USEA)**—the state's largest organization of education support professionals—has voted to become a "statewide local affiliate" of NEA. USEA leaders say the move was made to improve representation at the national level and to expand benefits and services to members.

Resolved: 'End the Offset'

ALASKA Following unanimous votes of approval in the Alaska House and Senate, Governor Frank Murkowski has signed House Joint Resolution 30, which urges Congress to repeal the Social Security Act's Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision. The resolution, introduced by **NEA-Alaska/Retired** members, states that these federal rules, which slash the earned Social Security benefits of certain wage earners, "discourage individuals with private sector or military service from seeking teaching and other public employment positions in Alaska."

Bad Sign for School Board

NEW YORK For more than 1,000 days, 54 special education aides at the Steuben-Allegany Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) have fought for a new contract. Now the **Steuben-Allegany BOCES Employees Support Staff Association** has rolled out its newest weapon: an illuminated sign mounted on a flatbed truck.

Recently the truck circled a building where the BOCES board was meeting. Side A of the flatbed sign read: *"We Deserve a Fair Shake."* Side B: *"1,000 Days, No Contract."* And **NEA-New York** drove it all home by telling a fascinated media, "It's time for the BOCES board to step up and get this contract settled!"

No More Leftovers

NEBRASKA ESPs at three Metropolitan Technical Community College campuses in Omaha have voted for bargaining representation by the **Nebraska State Education Association.** "The big thing I see in this organization," says ESP activist Laura England, "is that we now have a right to say to the board, 'that's not good enough.' We want more than the leftovers. We deserve more."

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CASH COW

$393 Billion

PHOTO: DANNY PECK/PECK STUDIOS

FOR BUSINESSES LOOKING TO GRAB A BIGGER SHARE OF THE $393 BILLION K-12 EDUCATION INDUSTRY, THE BOTTOM LINE IS LOOKING UP. BUT WHEN PRIVATE PROFITS OUTWEIGH PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY, EDUCATORS AND KIDS PAY THE PRICE.

BY KRISTEN LOSCHERT, JOHN O'NEIL, AND DAVE WINANS

It was the videotape that sold her.

With 15 years of public school teaching under her belt and another 15 years as a corporate trainer, Laurie Mozlin knew a little about teaching kids and business innovation. So as she watched the slick video featuring the "Edison Schools" model in the spring of 2001, she felt a jolt of exhilaration. Images filled the screen—inner-city kids engaged and achieving. The voiceover extolled the for-profit firm's research-based curriculum and "management by team."

"I was so excited about these tried-and-true programs that they said would work with underprivileged kids," says Mozlin. So after a job interview, she quickly signed on to teach at an Edison-run charter school, the Milwaukee Urban League Academy of Business and Economics. Later, as she jetted to Virginia and Pennsylvania for training, Mozlin's spirits remained high. It looked to her like Edison had the patent on a formula that had eluded traditional public schools.

"I felt like I was part of a new movement," Mozlin recalls.

It took only a few short weeks for the promises to unravel. Administrative support at the school collapsed. Office phones went unanswered until after classes started, so Mozlin and her colleagues had to scramble to cover classes for teachers who called in sick earlier in the morning. Supplies of books and other curriculum materials ran short. Teachers weren't reimbursed for supplies as promised. Fights between kids broke out regularly and, Mozlin says, some of the best students transferred out.

By the time Christmas break arrived, Mozlin, a designated "lead teacher," had taught three different combinations of third and fourth graders in three different classrooms. By May, she'd quit, along with 15 colleagues who resigned or were pushed out that year—and replaced by staff lacking full certification.

Mozlin, now happily teaching in the Kenosha (Wisconsin) Unified School District, says she and her colleagues learned a hard lesson that dreadful year in what happens when corporate profits—not student success—drive the bottom line.

"We were sold a bill of goods," she says now. For-profit firms like Edison "cut corners every chance they get because the bottom line for them is making money. They are not in it for the kids, they are in it for themselves."

'Privateers' on the Prowl

Nearly $400 billion are spent on K–12 public education annually and, for private firms looking to grab a bigger slice of the pie, the prospects are only getting sweeter.

Just two decades ago, for-profit firms selling to schools limited their wares to goods like textbooks, soda machines, and cleaning supplies. Now, transportation and food services, substitute teachers and supplemental instructional services—even the management of entire public schools—are up for grabs in the headlong rush to "privatize" public education.

Buyers better beware, though. Student achievement is trickier to deliver than computers and playground equipment, and studies show for-profit firms simply don't outperform public school teachers and education support professionals. And many firms have outright failed, forcing them to bow out of their contracts just a few years after signing them.

Yet these days offers for their services just keep rolling in.

Education Management Organizations (EMOs), companies like Edison that contract to run public schools, didn't even exist

INVESTMENT

MARKET WATCH:

More than 50 for-profit Education Management Organizations manage more than 460 schools in 28 states and the District of Columbia.

until about a decade ago. But the number of public schools operated by EMOs has more than tripled in the past five years, with a total enrollment of more than 200,000 kids, according to an Arizona State University study. Also looking to expand their market share: for-profit providers of tutoring and other instructional services. They're scrambling to take advantage of a potential $2 billion market in "supplemental educational services" (SES) made possible through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the so-called No Child Left Behind law. NCLB pointedly left the door open for private companies to offer tutoring to students who attend "failing" public schools, and businesses aim to cash in. "The stream of revenue makes our eyes pop out of our heads," a lobbyist for a prominent SES provider, HOSTS, Inc., recently told Stateline .org, an online news service.

> "We were sold a bill of goods. [For-profit education firms] cut corners every chance they get because the bottom line for them is making money."
>
> —LAURIE MOZLIN

Laurie Mozlin spent a disastrous year teaching at a school managed by Edison Schools. "Beware of people who claim to have the answers."

Even more alarming, voucher plans—the ultimate form of privatization—continue to gain footholds in new areas. Taxpayer-funded voucher schemes now operate in Milwaukee; Cleveland; Washington, D.C.; and the state of Florida.

So who's behind this frenzied movement to funnel public education dollars into private hands? While the Bush Administration may be the most prominent of those leading the charge, school boards aiming to save a few dollars, free-market ideologues convinced that private employees can do a better job than public school teachers and ESPs, and politicians with a history of bashing schools and promoting vouchers all play a part.

"The lines are being drawn between 'privateers' who believe in expanding the opportunities for private industry at any cost and those of us who believe in free enterprise but think some things—the schools, the military, your public library, Social Security—don't fit the for-profit model," says NEA Secretary-Treasurer Lily Eskelsen. "Some public services just should not be at the mercy of CEO stock options."

The privateers and their allies in government argue that forcing public schools to compete with private schools and private industry will raise quality and ensure that schools remain accountable to the public.

Yet a recent study by the U.S. General Accounting Office found that public schools managed by EMOs made little or no difference in student achievement compared with traditional public schools. Research on the achievement of students attending private schools with vouchers in cities like Milwaukee and Cleveland came to the same conclusion—no advantage for the private sector.

Ironically, private service providers and private schools are exempt from many of the state and federal accountability provisions to which educators must adhere. In Florida, for example, students in public schools labeled as "failing" can use taxpayer-funded vouchers to attend private schools. But private schools aren't required to give their students the state test—the one that got the public school labeled as a failure in the first place. Nor are private schools required to use certified teachers or accept all students. It's a classic double-standard. "We believe public dollars should be devoted to those institutions that have public accountability," says Eskelsen.

ESPs on the Front Lines

The privatization movement first hit school support services during the 1980s—and ESPs have been fighting back ever since.

"When you privatize a teacher, it's very visible," explains Ron Bacon, an organizing consultant for the Michigan Education Association. "ESPs are silent cuts. These invisible cuts aren't as noticeable to the public and parents, so they're easier to make."

Efforts to privatize support services often come down to one thing: cold hard cash.

"Board of education members as employers think privatization saves money," says Paul McBride, a former ESP organizer for the New Jersey Education Association and author of NEA's guide *Beat Privatization*. In fact, he says, it usually costs them more.

A study by Kent State University of school transportation trends in Ohio, for example, found that districts using private bus companies to transport students paid anywhere from 24 to 50 percent more per student than districts keeping those services in-house. The costs per mile were even greater: districts paid between 51 and 63 percent more for private transportation than district-run programs.

PHOTO: PETER ZUZGA

MARKET WATCH:

An Ohio study found that districts using private bus companies to transport students paid between 51 and 63 percent more per mile than district-run programs.

But the costs of privatization go well beyond the economics.

School boards sometimes look only at the surface tasks ESPs perform—cleaning buildings, transporting students, cooking food—without seeing the community connections and outside skills ESPs offer. For instance, many ESPs are bilingual and help schools communicate with parents learning English, says McBride, while others volunteer in the community as firefighters or emergency medical technicians. (In fact, 78 percent of ESPs volunteer with community organizations.) Most ESPs live in the districts where they work, too, giving them a vested interest as taxpayers in the well-being of the schools, as well as the opportunity to get to know their students outside of school hours.

"All of these things are talents and skills contributing to the education of the students and helping the staff, but no one measures that or pays for that and the [school] board doesn't even think about it," says McBride. And there's something else: private contractors may not do proper background checks on their employees, putting students and staff at risk.

The loss of ESP jobs also may mean less purchasing power for local residents, less revenue in the district, and potentially less funding for public education.

"Most people who work here, their children are students in the district, and if they weren't employed it would affect their kids as well," says Andrew Hurst Jr., president of the Benton Harbor Service Employees Association (BHSEA) in Michigan.

So when Benton Harbor school officials threatened to outsource the district's custodians in the name of saving money, BHSEA, which represents custodians, maintenance, transportation, and security workers, sprang into action. Members developed a plan to have the custodians work in pairs or small groups during the evening shift to maximize the limited workforce and reduce overtime costs, says Hurst. Then they mobilized the community behind their idea.

"We had a lot of community support and that put a lot of pressure on the school board to listen to our proposal," says Hurst. "[The board members] realized it was in their best interest to listen to what we had to offer" and to keep the custodians.

Districts that privatize, though, lose more than a quality workforce. They also lose the flexibility to add programs or services as their needs change, since private contracts limit the scope of the work performed. Any duties performed outside the contract's parameters usually incur extra charges for the district, says McBride; although few contracts ever penalize the contractors if they make mistakes. More importantly, districts may lose the capacity to break away from a contractor and give the work back to public employees, even though doing so could save money and increase quality.

QUALITY

Dishing Up a Quality Program

FOR FIVE YEARS, Marriott Corp., a for-profit food services company, ran the school cafeterias in Adrian, Michigan—and ran the food service program into debt. Employees suffered through involuntary job transfers, while students endured smaller meals made with poor quality food, says Jennie Zubke, head cook at Adrian High School. As a result, fewer students lined up for lunch.

Then in 1995, the district's food service employees proposed an innovative idea: let the workers run the program. With support from school administrators, teachers, and parents, the food service ESPs convinced the school board to ditch Marriott and let them cook up a plan to run the operation.

"It makes us, as the employees, feel we are doing something important, not just in the kitchen," says Jody Faust, assistant cook at Adrian High School. "That we can manage our operation is a boost for our group. It's a sense of ownership."

Now, a committee of food service employees and district managers handles everything from menu planning to equipment purchases and hiring decisions. The head cooks and managers hold standing positions on the committee, while the food service employees elect additional representatives to serve two-year terms.

Since the change, employee morale has increased substantially, says Zubke, as has student participation in the food program. And, under the leadership of the ESPs, the food service program has done something Marriott never accomplished: it has earned a profit every year. And those profits go back into the school system, not into the pockets of a private corporation.

Most importantly, the people making decisions now about the nutritional needs of students are the same people who serve them lunch every afternoon.

"We are with the kids every day, we know what the kids need," says Faust. "With a company, they don't interact with students like we do. A lot of the personalization is lost there. We're with the kids and we're taking all this information back to the committee, so it's a really accurate account of what's going on."

—KRISTEN LOSCHERT

Assistant cook **Jody Faust** serves up a quality meal now that ESPs run her district's food service program.

PHOTO: KEVIN FOWLER

Evelyn Furneaux and other members of the Naperville Transportation Association rallied community support to keep the privateers at bay.

At the Classroom Door

Private firms increasingly are looking into other areas of the school campus as well, and many are knocking on the classroom door.

Take substitute teaching. Kelly Services, a leading provider of temporary help, now boasts an "educational staffing" division that supplies an average of 1,600 subs daily to more than 850 schools across 30 states.

It goes much further than subs, though. Some 50 EMOs are managing more than 460 schools in 28 states and the District of Columbia, according to researchers at Arizona State University (ASU). About 80 percent of the EMO-run schools are "charter schools," and they've made greater inroads in states with permissive charter school laws, particularly Arizona and Michigan.

Another new wrinkle: some private firms use charter status to offer "virtual" courses to home schoolers—with the public picking up the tab. Such firms now operate 17 virtual schools in 11 states, enrolling more than 10,000 students.

Strong anti-public school sentiment among some legislators, combined with shaky claims about the superiority of the private sector, have paved the way for these for-profit companies, says NEA staffer Heidi Steffens, an expert on privatization.

Slick marketing, as Laurie Mozlin found out, also helps make the sale. Edison Schools, which ran the charter school where Mozlin spent her ill-fated year, manages 102 schools with a total enrollment of more than 70,000 students—up from only four schools in 1994. Edison's own Web site (at www.edisonschools.com) tells visitors the firm's research-based design delivers a "world-class education."

> "These drivers build strong relationships with the students and the parents. They get a lot of personal attention from us. I don't know if they would get that so much from someone who just viewed this as a job."
>
> —EVELYN FURNEAUX

But Edison's results don't back its inflated claims. Edison manages and releases its own data on student achievement in the schools it oversees—data that show gains in Edison schools. But independent examinations of Edison's performance compared with that of similar public schools tell a different story.

"One of the true scandals of the EMOs—Edison and others—is that they've been allowed to do their own accountability" says Steffens. "I mean, that's like asking General Motors to let you know if their cars are safe or fuel efficient."

According to Steffens, as Edison has grown over the past several years, increasing numbers of charter schools and districts have cut ties with the firm, blaming high costs and poor service. Edison's not alone in that regard. The ASU report found that more than 60 public schools managed by EMOs have terminated agreements in the past five years, mostly because districts "felt that the arrangement with the EMO was too costly or had not performed up to academic expectations."

PHOTO: MATT FERGUSON

RISKY

Privatizing Social Security An Unwarranted Gamble

RETIRED Orlando, Florida, teacher Ulysses Floyd left the classroom behind knowing that he could look forward to a guaranteed check from Social Security each month to supplement his teachers' pension. He's worried, though, that younger teachers and education support professionals may not be able to depend on Uncle Sam to hold up his end of the bargain.

The reason? President Bush and other politicians aim to privatize Social Security to allow workers to invest part of the money dedicated to Social Security into a private, individual account. The idea rankles Floyd, who recently e-mailed Bush to urge him not to weaken Social Security with a risky privatization scheme.

"We all put money into the system together, just as my father and his generation put the money in before us," says Floyd, who gets a monthly check of about $800 that increases each year with a cost-of-living adjustment. "If Social Security becomes privatized, it will be everybody for themselves. And we'll all be at the whim of the stock market."

Social Security, like the pension plans held by the vast majority of public school teachers and ESPs, is considered a **defined-benefit plan.** Put in a certain number of years on the job, plug your salary and a few other variables into your system's formula, and you can count on the resulting dollar figure to be there every month during your retirement. Other retirement plans, such as the 401 (k) option, are termed **defined-contribution plans**—and they are not guaranteed. With these plans, you'll never be certain what monthly amount you'll be able to draw from the account during your retirement. Worst-case scenario? Your investments tank while inflation and other costs (such as health care) drive up your spending, draining your retirement portfolio just as you settle into your "golden years."

The proposal to privatize Social Security is not new, but it heated up again when Bush, in his State of the Union address, called for making Social Security "a source of ownership for the American people." That's privateer-speak for unleashing hordes of investment advisors and brokers on younger workers to "help" them figure out where on Wall Street to invest their hard-earned benefits.

Then, in February, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan made headlines when he said Social Security was in financial trouble, and that Congress should consider cutting benefits. Privatization advocates came out swinging, saying only private accounts could help restore Social Security to sound financial footing.

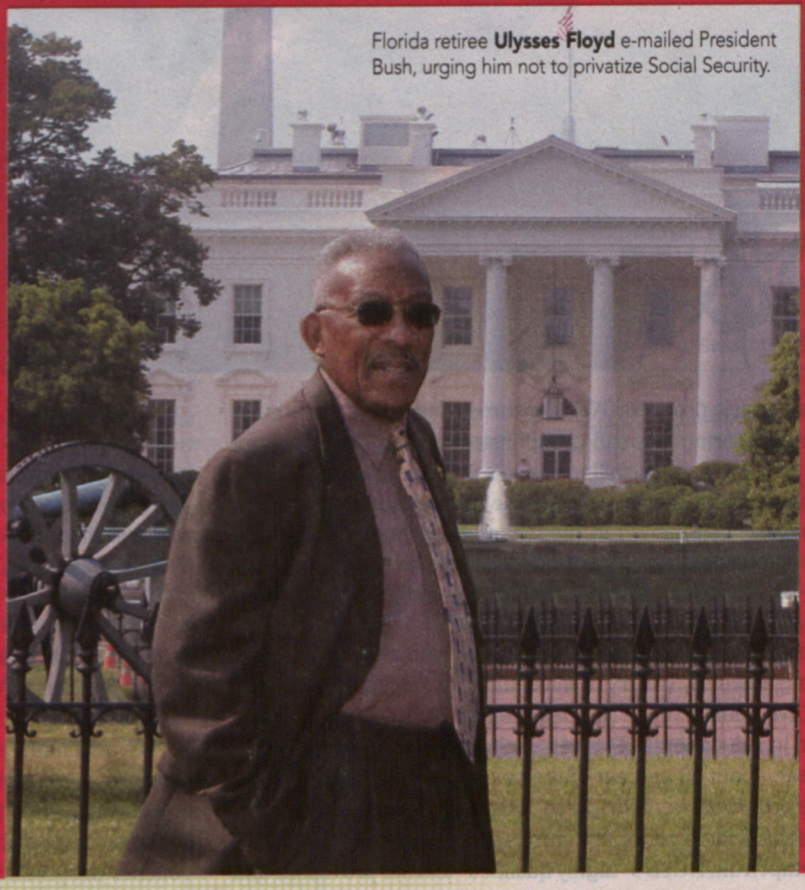
Dean Baker, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, calls the uproar over Social Security's finances a "phony crisis."

"Social Security is tremendously popular," Baker says. "The Administration can't say 'let's get rid of it,' so they say the system is going under. They say, 'we can't let that happen. We have promises to keep to our retirees and privatization is the only way to save it.'"

The fact is, privatization would worsen Social Security's fiscal well-being—putting future beneficiaries at risk. The transition to a new system that included private accounts could exceed $1 trillion, and would force cuts in guaranteed benefits to younger workers. "To have younger workers invest even a modest amount in private accounts—say 10 percent of their contributions—they'd have to cut benefits by as much as 50 percent," says NEA Secretary-Treasurer Lily Eskelsen. "So you'd have a private account that goes up and down with the stock market, while your Social Security benefit is cut in half. That's the trade-off, and you'd have no safety net."

Privatizing Social Security would be sure to fatten the wallets of financial firms, but it's a bad deal for public employees. So why is it getting another airing? Floyd has one theory. "This is the Bush mentality—to privatize everything," he says. "He represents big business, and the more he does for them, the more they're going to give to his campaign. But I can tell you that if we privatize Social Security, it may not be there for you when you need it."

—JOHN O'NEIL
ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY BARBARA JACOB



Florida retiree **Ulysses Floyd** e-mailed President Bush, urging him not to privatize Social Security.

PHOTO: SANDY SCHAEFFER

Cashing in After Hours

Such a shaky track record might make educators think policy makers would roll back the incursion of private firms in public school classrooms. Instead, many are rolling out the red carpet.

The so-called No Child Left Behind law, passed by Congress in 2001 and now hitting schools like a tidal wave, includes what one pro-privatization researcher lauds as "politically palatable vouchers." Under NCLB, students in public schools failing to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for three consecutive years must be offered tutoring or small-group instruction outside of school hours. (After five years, failing schools face an "alternate school governance plan" that could turn the school over to a "private management company.") In the meantime, school districts pay for the supplementary educational services out of their Title I funds—an average of $1,281 per student—and private firms are lining up to grab a share of the booty.

> "From my perspective, voucher schools aren't required to do anything. If taxpayers really knew how their money was being spent without accountability, there would be a revolt."
>
> —MICHELE ROY

For-profit market leaders such as Sylvan and Kaplan K12 Learning Systems "will try to make this into a big industry," predicts Clive Belfield of the National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Last year, about 60 percent of the state-approved supplemental service providers were for-profit companies, says Steffens.

Best of all for vendors, few strings are attached. SES providers are exempt from NCLB's "highly qualified" teacher provisions and aren't required to serve students with disabilities or limited English proficiency. And "they're not generally covered by federal civil rights laws," says Joel Packer, NCLB policy expert. For example, "a religious school can legally discriminate in employment."

In the end, stresses Packer, school districts will foot the bill for this NCLB mandate, even though nearly 7,400 districts in 10 states stand to receive less Title I money this year. (In fact, the overall Title I budget for the 2004–05 school year falls $6.2 billion short of the amount authorized by NCLB.) The bottom line? Soon more public schools will fail to meet "adequate yearly progress," forcing them to provide supplemental services with less federal money—while private vendors, unencumbered by NCLB mandates, walk away with profits.

Milwaukee elementary teacher **Michele Roy** says that unregulated voucher schools in her urban district "get to have their cake and eat it, too."

The Ultimate Step: Vouchers

It's not just Congress that flashed the green light to privateers. The Bush Administration has gone to extraordinary lengths to promote the ultimate form of privatization—vouchers.

As originally proposed by President Bush, NCLB would have provided private tuition vouchers to all students in schools not showing adequate yearly progress. NEA lobbying and bipartisan opposition stripped the 2001 law of this national voucher program, forcing the President to scale back his ambi-

PHOTO: PETER ZUZGA

tions. But Bush and his education department still push for federal funding of state-level voucher schemes.

Earlier this year, Bush won passage of a federally funded, $14 million voucher program for Washington, D.C., a plan the Administration hopes "becomes a model for the nation," U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige recently said.

In the Fiscal Year 2005 budget, the Administration is calling for another $14 million for D.C. vouchers, and it seeks another $50 million to "help cities across the nation start similar programs," according to Paige. The Department of Education already has doled out more than $75 million in grants to voucher advocates since Bush took office, reports a People for the American Way study.

More states are flirting with vouchers as well, and one, Florida, has launched three statewide voucher and tax credit programs at the behest of pro-privatization Governor Jeb Bush. One of the programs offers vouchers to students in schools labeled as underachieving by the state; another offers vouchers to students with disabilities; a third gives tax credits to firms that donate money to voucher-distributing groups.

No one has formally evaluated how the more than 20,000 students using the vouchers are achieving, but the programs' lack of accountability alarms many educators. In a series of investigative reports, the *Palm Beach Post* uncovered a host of abuses—from voucher schools lacking quality checks and accreditation to outright embezzlement. One private school operator pocketed more than $250,000 in voucher money without enrolling students. Another school, founded by a man now facing terrorism charges, received more than $300,000 in vouchers. Still, the state legislature failed to pass a voucher reform bill before adjourning last spring.

"None of the schools that take vouchers is regulated in any serious way," says Shelley Vana, outgoing president of the Palm Beach County Classroom Teachers Association and a member of the Florida State House of Representatives. As a legislator, Vana hears from parents of children with special needs who now regret taking the vouchers. "They say, 'The people in the private school I've chosen just don't have any experience in [this area]. I've made a bad choice.' But their child has lost a year."

And while state funding flows to voucher schools, "the public system is losing money, even though we have the same operating costs," Vana says. Class sizes in Palm Beach public schools are high and teachers must dig in to prepare students for the state assessment test—from which voucher students are exempt. "Parents are angry," Vana reports.

Milwaukee Gets Milked

That scenario must sound familiar to educators in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, home of the nation's oldest voucher program, which covered 13,268 low-income students in 106 private and religious schools in 2003–04.

And What About You?

What does privatization mean for your job and the schools in your community? Find out more in the special online bonus edition of the September *NEA Today* cover story. You'll learn:

- **WHERE IN YOUR STATE OR REGION** education management organizations (EMOs) have set up shop—and what the research really says about their performance.
- **TALKING POINTS** on school vouchers to use with your legislator (or your opinionated brother-in-law).
- **THE FACTS ON HOW** privatizing Social Security could derail your Golden Years.

For access to our online bonus edition, go to www.nea.org/neatodayextra and click on from there.

Milwaukee launched its program in 1990 and it's been roiled by scandals involving subpar instruction and financial improprieties ever since. Earlier this year the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported that administrators of the private Mandella School for Science and Math signed up more than 200 no-show students and then cashed $330,000 in state-issued voucher checks, which the principal used to buy a pair of used Mercedes-Benz vehicles.

When a Milwaukee judge finally shut down the troubled school, public teachers in the K–7 Sherman Multicultural Arts School welcomed a Mandella student with open arms—even though his $5,943 voucher did not follow until months later.

But the baggage was heavy. This child "wasn't able to write his name, didn't know his letters or numbers, had a hard time focusing on his work, and displayed a lot of inappropriate behavior," reports fourth-grade teacher Michele Roy, a building rep for the 8,000-member Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association (MTEA). "He told a K–4 teacher that he 'played' at the Mandella school."

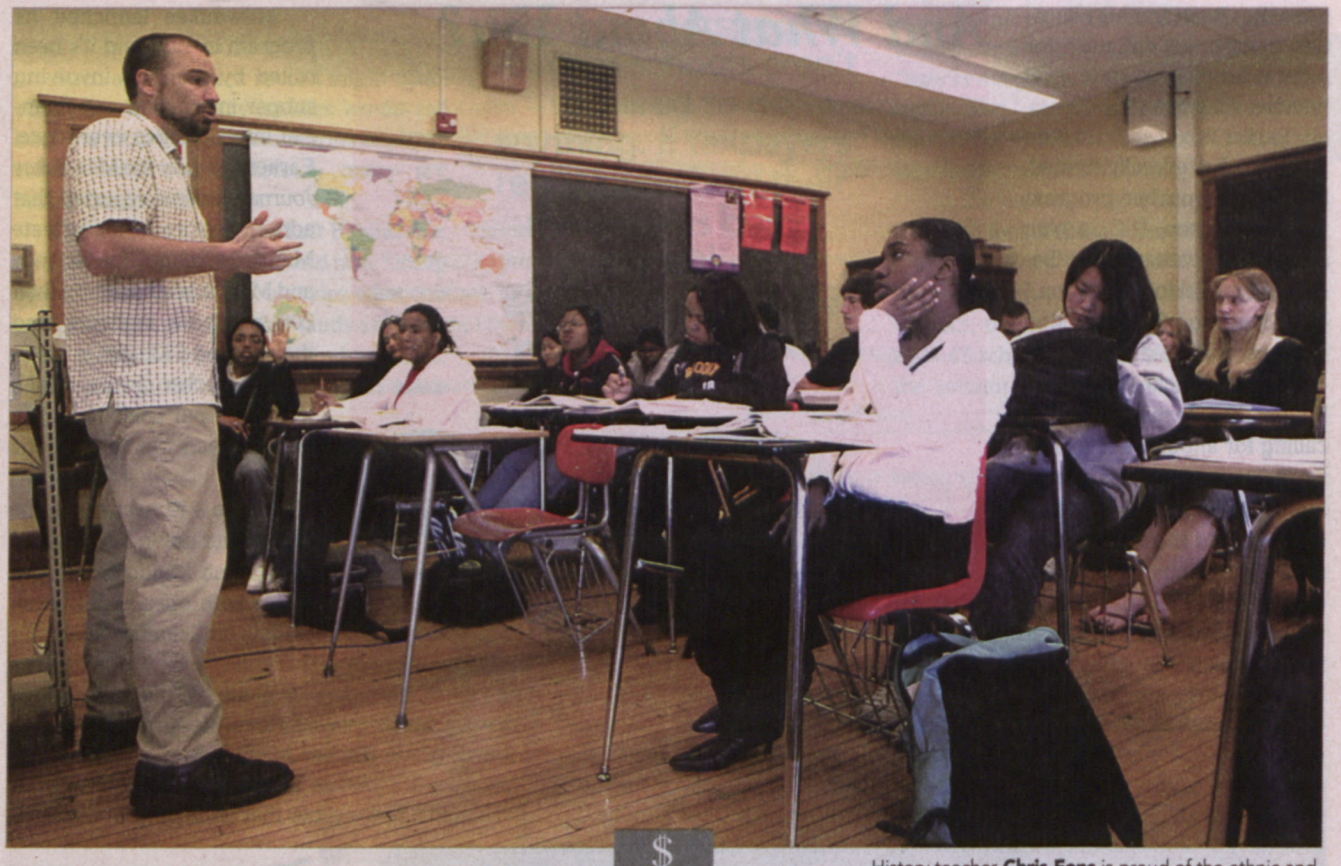
What does it take to open a school and begin accepting voucher students?

"If you want to create a 'choice' [voucher] school, you just fill out an application with DPI [the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction] and obtain an occupancy permit from the City of Milwaukee," says Joe Donovan, a spokesperson for the Wisconsin DPI. "That's how easy it is." Easier than buying a gun or opening a nursing home. Wisconsin requires neither criminal background checks nor the hiring of licensed staff—including teachers—for voucher schools. Nor does the state mandate school governance through open meetings, public reporting (be it of test results, racial statistics, or dropout rates), or equal access to students with disabilities. And Milwaukee voucher students don't participate in the Wisconsin assessment system,

INVESTMENT

MARKET WATCH:

Sixty percent of 1,400 approved providers of "supplemental educational services" under the No Child Left Behind law are for-profit firms.



History teacher **Chris Fons** is proud of the ethnic and economic diversity in his Milwaukee classroom.

so the state can't tell how well they do compared with students in other schools.

That double standard makes Roy absolutely livid. "They get to have their cake and eat it, too," she fumes. "If taxpayers really knew that their money is being spent without accountability there would be a revolt."

While a voucher school can legally get by with a teaching force of high school graduates, Roy's neighborhood public school offers a highly motivated staff of "certified teachers in every classroom, plus a certified exceptional needs teacher, all of whom spend a lot of time putting pieces of the puzzle together" for their students, she says.

> "We have a public duty to educate everybody, while voucher schools get the cream of the crop."
>
> —CHRIS FONS

History teacher Chris Fons, who holds two master's degrees, is equally proud of instructional quality at Riverside University High School, a selective college prep school that closely mirrors the racial and economic diversity of Milwaukee. While private schools may legally choose to only educate the "cream of the crop," Fons, an MTEA building rep, points out, "Milwaukee Public Schools [MPS] have the public duty to educate everybody."

The district needs every last dollar to fulfill that mission and yet it loses "some $44 million annually from taxpayers to fund the voucher program," says MTEA President Bob Lehmann. "It's taken right from the MPS budget and then taxpayers have to fill the void. This robs the opportunity of public schools to get better."

Less funding means staff cuts and unrelenting pressure on front-line educators like Roy and Fons, who, like their Florida colleagues, have watched their class sizes skyrocket.

"We're doing more and more with less," laments Roy.

Writing on the Wall

And the situation most likely will get worse before it gets better, since vouchers come in many guises. Plans known as tax credit vouchers, which offer dollar-for-dollar credit to individual or corporate taxpayers for money spent on private school tuition, have been gaining in popularity, surfacing repeatedly in state legislatures. This year NEA state affiliates helped slow down or stop voucher or tax credit voucher legislation in, among other places, Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, New Hampshire, and Utah.

Given this legislative momentum and the marketing blitz of for-profit firms entering the education sector, it's reassuring to know that the number of students enrolled in schools run by EMOs or using vouchers to attend private schools is still comparatively small. But public schools remain vulnerable.

Ultimately, whether you're fending off a voucher plan or a subcontractor, prevention is the key, which means building strong connections between the public schools and the community.

"We absolutely need to partner with other community organizations that are impacted by voucher programs, that have a common interest in maintaining our cities and our neighborhoods," says NEA voucher specialist Susan Nogan. "Bring everybody together to talk about what's good in public schools, what works, and what's needed."

In Milwaukee that meant forming a coalition between MTEA, parents, and faith-based groups to build support for the

PHOTO: PETER ZUZGA

public schools and opposition to the city's voucher plan.

In Illinois, meanwhile, where state law obligates school districts to consider any bid offered by a private transportation company, members of the Naperville Transportation Association (NTA) focused on educating their community and school board about the real costs of privatizing transportation. The strategy worked, and the school district stuck with the public operation.

NTA just worked the system, says Evelyn Furneaux, NTA president. Association members met with school officials and secured the right to attend any district discussions about the private bids. The drivers also met with presidents from other associations to rally their support and wrote letters to the local newspaper about their cause. At the same time, three members of the school board were facing re-election. So NTA organized a forum to introduce the candidates to the community, question them about their views on privatization, and educate the public about the drawbacks of privatizing their services.

"These drivers build strong relationships with the students and the parents. They get a lot of personal attention from us," says Furneaux. "I don't know if they would get that so much from someone who just viewed this as a job."

That's a message she and others say ESPs and teachers need to shout from the rooftops.

Private firms "are out selling their product, and we don't sell ours enough," says Laurie Mozlin, who is teaching at Mahone Middle School in Kenosha, Wisconsin, this fall.

In the end, the solutions to public education's challenges will come from within the public sector, not outside it, she adds. "Beware of people who claim to have the answers. Stick with the people who are the experts at it. Trust me, I've seen the worst and survived." nea

FIGHT BACK

Send the Privateers Packing

So, privateers are romancing your school district to drum up more business. Is there anything you can do to stop them? You bet. ESP members wrote the book on fighting privateers when they come calling. With the right plan, a united local, and some good old-fashioned hit-the-streets footwork, you'll show school officials and community members the public employee difference. To get started:

POINT TO THE CONTRACT

Many locals have bargained for language that prohibits privatization or that limits the reasons districts may use it, says Donovan King, labor relations research specialist in NEA Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy. Now's the time to use it. Local Associations also can lobby for benefits for employees adversely affected by privatized services, he adds. You have to push for contract protections before privatization's knocking on your door, though. "Once you're in the middle of a [privatization] fight, it's very difficult to get anything at the table," King says.

MEET WITH THE THREATENED EMPLOYEES

Emotions and rumors will fly, so now is the time to get everyone on the same page. The local president should meet with the employees facing privatization to dispel any rumors and give members an opportunity to discuss concerns in a safe environment. This first step shows employees their local is behind them. This is also the time to organize a committee of members to coordinate your response campaign.

ORGANIZE YOUR CAMPAIGN

Develop a calendar of events leading up to the date when your district intends to act on its plans to privatize. For instance, bus drivers may want to coordinate a "Walk the Route" event where they walk their normal bus routes one weekend and meet with parents to let them know about the cut in services they face. The local Association also should monitor school board action on the proposal and investigate any privatization plans in neighboring districts. Those steps worked for members of the Support Personnel Association of Lee County, in Ft. Myers, Florida, when they successfully turned back a bid by ServiceMaster to take over some custodial, grounds, and maintenance duties, says Bob Rushlow, the local president. "We sent e-mails to schools all over the country and got great information about problems with ServiceMaster in other areas," information they then presented to the school board, Rushlow says. "Now we attend every board meeting and watch for any item relating to subcontracting. We're vigilant."

COMPARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE PRIVATEERS'

Collect information about workers' job duties, including those they perform outside their job descriptions, and job training. Find out how long they have worked for the district and lived in the community. Do any employees have special talents or volunteer with a community group? All of these skills benefit students and staff and will be lost if the district privatizes. Remember, privatization isn't about saving money. It's about cutting services. So show the school board that public employees make a difference. "You can always find someone to do the job cheaper," says Robert Ray, UniServ director in Naperville, Illinois. "But you won't find anyone to do the job better."

REACH OUT TO OTHER SCHOOL EMPLOYEES AND THE COMMUNITY

If the district wants to privatize one job group, most likely others will follow. Reach out to other educators and find out how privatization would affect their jobs and ask them to support your campaign. Then, hit the streets. Meet with members of the local PTA, Lions Club, or Jaycees to let community members know what students will lose if the district privatizes. Have each Association member talk with at least eight neighbors about your cause. "The only thing that succeeds in keeping the privateers out is public opinion and getting the community onboard against the privateers," says Paul McBride, a former ESP organizer for the New Jersey Education Association.

BYE BYE BLACKBOARD

Tired of screeching chalk and dust-covered clothes? Such hazards of the trade are becoming a thing of the past as schools send traditional classroom tools the way of fountain pens and dunce caps.

BY KRISTEN LOSCHERT

At first glance, Tony Rugari's physics lesson at Thomas Edison High School in Fairfax, Virginia, seems pretty typical: students drawing lines on standard-size graph paper, Rugari working the room, checking their progress. And Kenny, a cool-talking teen sporting cornrows and a P. Diddy jacket, appears disinterested. But when Rugari reviews his work and sends him to the board to plot his graph, this reserved upperclassman transforms into a giddy grade-schooler. "I'm going to the SMART Board. I'm going to the SMART Board," he taunts as he struts to the front of the room. His classmates are obviously envious, based on the playful jeers they toss at him.

What could possibly turn even the most aloof teen into such an energetic learner? Rugari's secret weapon: the interactive whiteboard, the hottest trend in education technology.

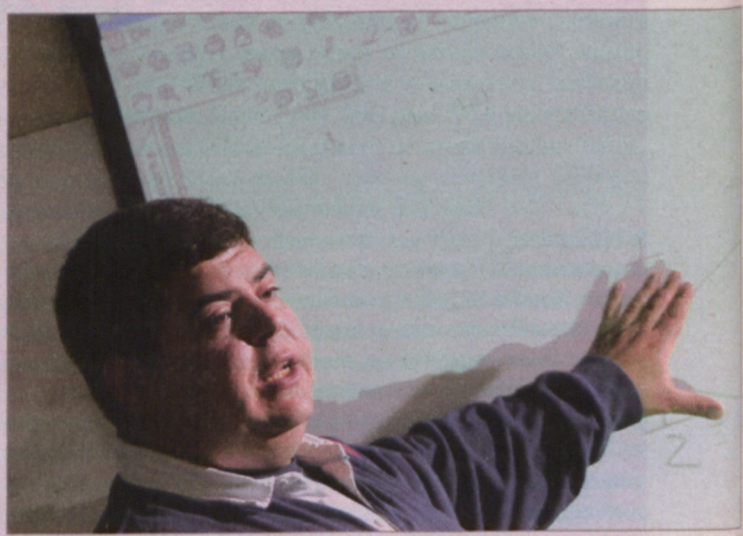
It's often called a "SMART Board" after one of the more popular models—and with good reason. This chalkboard-size device resembles a flat screen television and functions like a touchscreen computer monitor. The board connects to any desktop or laptop computer and, with the help of a projector, puts the computer screen in front of an entire class. More than 100,000 classrooms in 65 countries use the technology.

But the bells and whistles don't stop there. Using a light pen, or even their fingers, teachers can write notes, manipulate images on the screen, open new files and programs, run a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation, log on to the Internet, show a short film, and even record a lecture without ever stepping away from the board—or the front of the class. Then, with a single touch, teachers can save it all in the computer and recall it during their next class period or post it on the Web.

"It's a wonderful tool," says Diane DeFalco, a biology teacher at Edison. "This is much more interactive. It's incredible what we can do now that we couldn't do before."

In addition to the board, the technology comes with software that includes templates, maps, graphs, clip art, and virtual tools like protractors, calculators, keyboards, and rulers. Teachers also can import their own still images, video, and audio into the system and customize it to suit their specific lessons.

"I think it forces better teaching," says Mike Lenowitz, a math teacher and teacher technology trainer at the school. "I have to put more thought into how I organize my notes and think more carefully about what and how I present." That sort of preparation



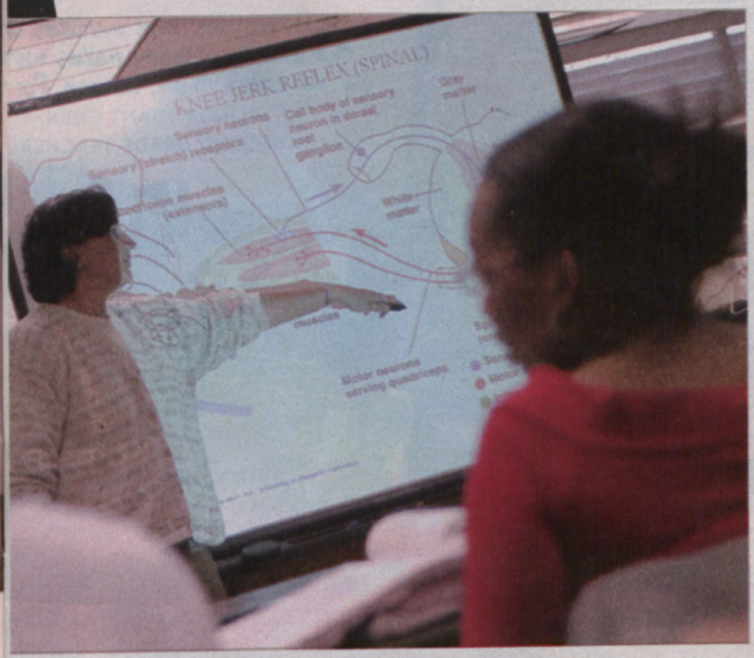
requires more front-end time, Lenowitz says, but it saves class time. Lenowitz no longer spends time writing notes on the board each period. Instead, he simply opens a file with notes he prepared ahead of time. Students spend more time discussing topics and less time copying notes as well since they

PHOTOS: SCOTT SUCHMAN

can access Lenowitz's presentations on the class Web site.

Social studies teachers like Edison's Gene Wood enjoy the more in-depth class discussions as well. Like Lenowitz, Wood also posts his lectures online for students. But the SMART Board really brings the history alive. With a click of a button, Wood moves seamlessly from a snappy PowerPoint presentation about the Declaration of Independence to an upbeat video clip from the movie-musical *1776*, without ever switching to a different piece of equipment.

Meanwhile, down the hall, HVAC teacher Rob Stringham uses the technology to explain the inner-workings of a refrigeration system to students in the career and technical education program. During his lesson, Stringham uses the SMART Board



to show an animated diagram, which he freezes as a still frame and divides into smaller components. Then he invites students to the board to reassemble the diagram in the correct sequence.

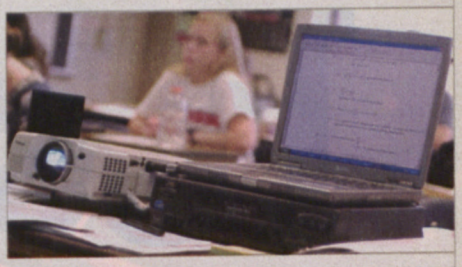
"One of the things I noticed right off the bat [when I started teaching] is students would not come up to the board," says Stringham, a fifth-year teacher. "With the SMART Board, they want to come up to the board, write on it, just touch it and play with it. It's really increased participation."

The reason is simple, say Stringham's students: chalk is boring. But the SMART Board, now that's cool.

Joline King, a kindergarten teacher at Kathryn Sue Simonton Elementary School in Queen Creek, Arizona, agrees. King's students enjoy the SMART Board just as much as the Edison students, eagerly writing letters on the giant screen, while an audio program provides the correct pronunciation.

"It definitely makes learning more hands-on so you hit all of the learning styles, and it helps the kids learn faster because it is so interactive," she says.

When Simonton Elementary School opened last year, the school came equipped with 42 SMART Boards, one for each classroom. But, new technology doesn't come cheap. A new SMART



With help from a projector and a computer, teachers like **Mike Lenowitz** (left), **Diane DeFalco** (center), and **Rob Stringham** (right) use SMART Boards to present high-tech interactive lessons to their students.

Board costs between $1,000 and $2,000, and the price includes the board, software, upgrades, and access to online training, support, and teaching resources. The technology also requires a digital projector, which costs about $1,000 if a school does not have one, and access to a computer. Since administrators at Simonton planned to have the technology from the beginning, they had to make some trade-offs—like settling for a smaller parking lot and less storage space—given the budget constraints facing the rural school where half of the students receive a free or reduced-price lunch. But the technology has been worth it, says Susan Kruse, the school's principal.

"In this day and age, high-tech is such a big deal. If we are going to keep the interest of the children, we have to have something they can relate to," she says. "The children are no longer passive learners. They are actively involved in their education."

Fortunately, Edison High School in Virginia did not have to wait for the school system to foot the bill for the 97 SMART Boards it installed during the past four years. Instead, the school received funding from a local business foundation. (SMART Technologies Inc., which introduced the SMART Board in 1991, also supports a foundation that helps schools acquire the technology. For more, visit www.smarterkids.org.)

Yet, even without outside funding, the SMART Board still makes a good investment, says Paul Downey, Edison's technology specialist. School officials wanted to provide equal technology access to all of Edison's students, 60 percent of whom are minorities and 20 percent of whom participate in the free and reduced-price lunch program. So, it was worth spending about $1,400 per board to outfit the school, he says. That's a steal in Downey's mind considering the school district spent more than twice that amount on a new television-VCR system for each classroom, which many teachers don't even use.

"The SMART Board and accessories can do all that and even more," Downey says. "It's just the best bang for the buck."

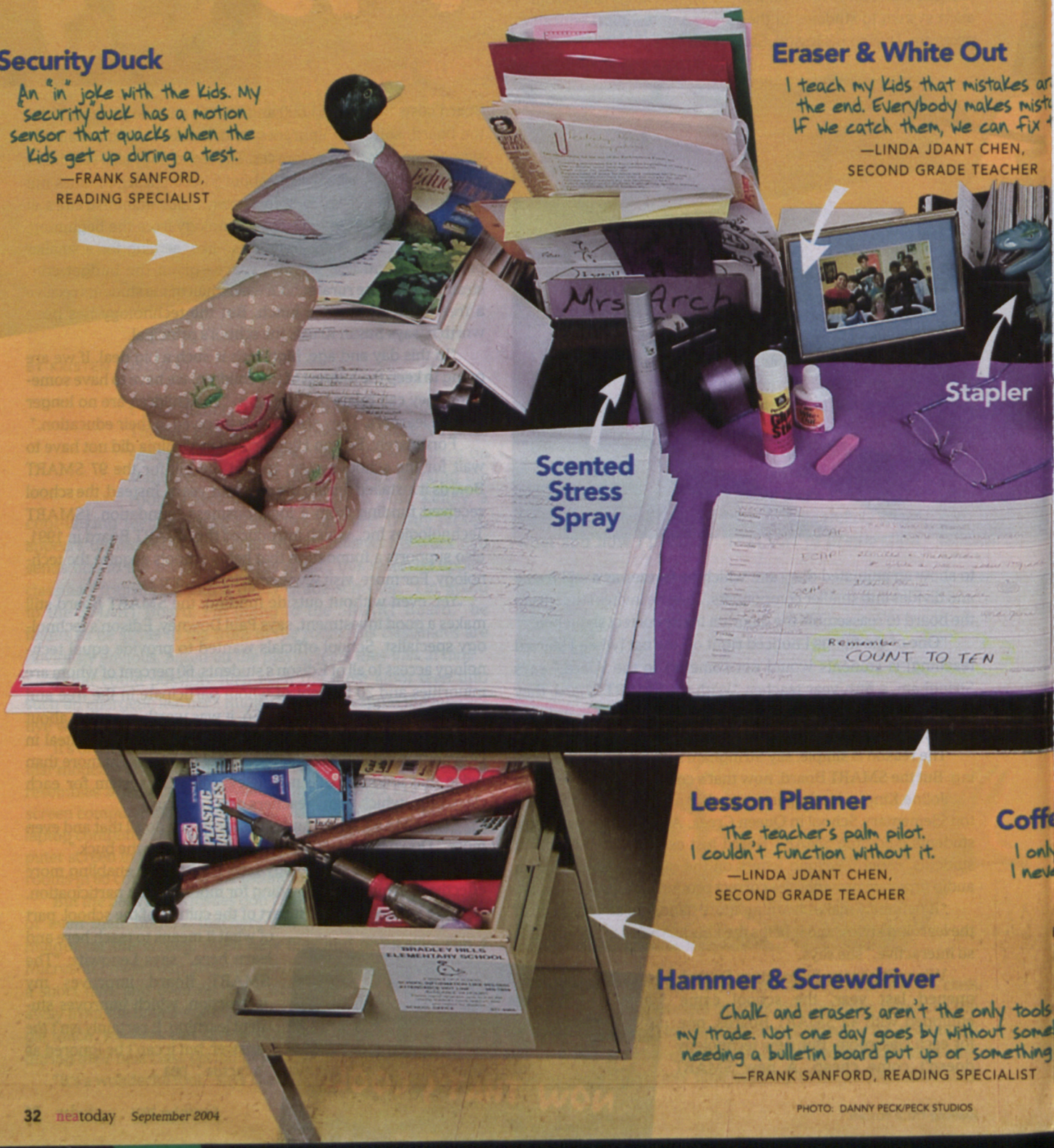
Ultimately, the technology pays for itself by enabling more effective teaching and providing for more student participation.

"We wanted to make it part of the culture of the school, part of what it means to teach here and learn here," says Lenowitz. "The SMART Board improves my instruction, which improves student learning. It certainly isn't *the* answer, but it can't be ignored as a factor." nea

CHALK IS BORING. BUT THE SMART BOARD, NOW THAT'S COOL.

It's A Teacl

Look familiar? A teacher's desk can't be mistaken for any other. W
NEA Today sent a team of crack investigators to discover the real purpose behind th



Security Duck

An "in" joke with the kids. My "security" duck has a motion sensor that quacks when the kids get up during a test.

—FRANK SANFORD, READING SPECIALIST

Eraser & White Out

I teach my kids that mistakes ar the end. Everybody makes mist If we catch them, we can fix

—LINDA JDANT CHEN, SECOND GRADE TEACHER

Stapler

Scented Stress Spray

Lesson Planner

The teacher's palm pilot. I couldn't function without it.

—LINDA JDANT CHEN, SECOND GRADE TEACHER

Coff

I onl
I nev

Hammer & Screwdriver

Chalk and erasers aren't the only tools my trade. Not one day goes by without some needing a bulletin board put up or something

—FRANK SANFORD, READING SPECIALIST

PHOTO: DANNY PECK/PECK STUDIOS

ner Thing

here else does Shakespeare meet Disney and Tim the Tool Guy?
se mysterious, often zany, belongings that find special comfort on a teacher's desk.

Desk Fan

This is for the hot flashes. I'll need a larger one next year.
—FRAN ARCHER, SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Cup

inse my coffee cup; wash it. The kids say t's disgusting.
FRANK SANFORD, ADING SPECIALIST

Candle

This candle is a gift from my students. I want to pass on the light to them and I want them to see the light within themselves.
—AARON JETER, U.S. AND WORLD HISTORY TEACHER

Office Assistant

Herbie, my office assistant, was a gift from my students. Whenever I leave the room, I park him behind my desk with a note in his claw.
—LAURA SCHLEY, DIGITAL ART RESOURCE TEACHER

[CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT]

John Kerry ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"I WILL INTRODUCE AMENDMENTS TO CHANGE the adequate yearly progress standard. We're going to empower teachers to teach, and not have to teach to the test." —JOHN KERRY

IN JULY THE NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY VOTED overwhelmingly to support Sen. John Kerry for U.S. President. Kerry accepted the vote warmly, beaming in by satellite with his running mate, John Edwards, to thank educators and assure them he would work honestly on their behalf. "You deserve a President who doesn't make you a scapegoat for his own broken promises," Kerry said.

The road to getting an NEA nod was not a swift one, however. It began in earnest last fall when NEA President Reg Weaver interviewed candidates for U.S. President who expressed an interest in an NEA recommendation. Before that the candidates had answered a questionnaire on education issues prepared by the NEA PAC Council. The following are excerpts from Weaver's interview with Kerry, who was later recommended by both the PAC Council and, this summer, by 86.5 percent of the NEA Representative Assembly delegates.

NEA is working to make great public schools for every child. But the so-called No Child Left Behind act is a one-size-fits-all approach, measuring the progress of schools and students with a single test. Would you support amending the law?

KERRY: Absolutely, I will lead the effort to amend the law. I will introduce amendments to change the adequate yearly progress standard. We're going to empower teachers to teach, and not have to teach to the test.

Also, we have teachers who have taught out of field for perhaps 15 or 20 years and they're darn good teachers, and everybody in the school knows it. It doesn't make sense to push them into some automated regimen where they've got to go back for recertification. So we're going to fix some things when I'm President, and we're going to guarantee the funding necessary that was promised.

How will you do that? Where will the money come from?

KERRY: We should not have tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, again and again and again, at the expense of our children. I'm going to roll back that Bush tax cut at the high end and we're going to fully fund IDEA, we're going to fully fund Title I, we're going to fund Head Start. My sister is a middle school teacher, or was until she was laid off at the beginning of this school year.

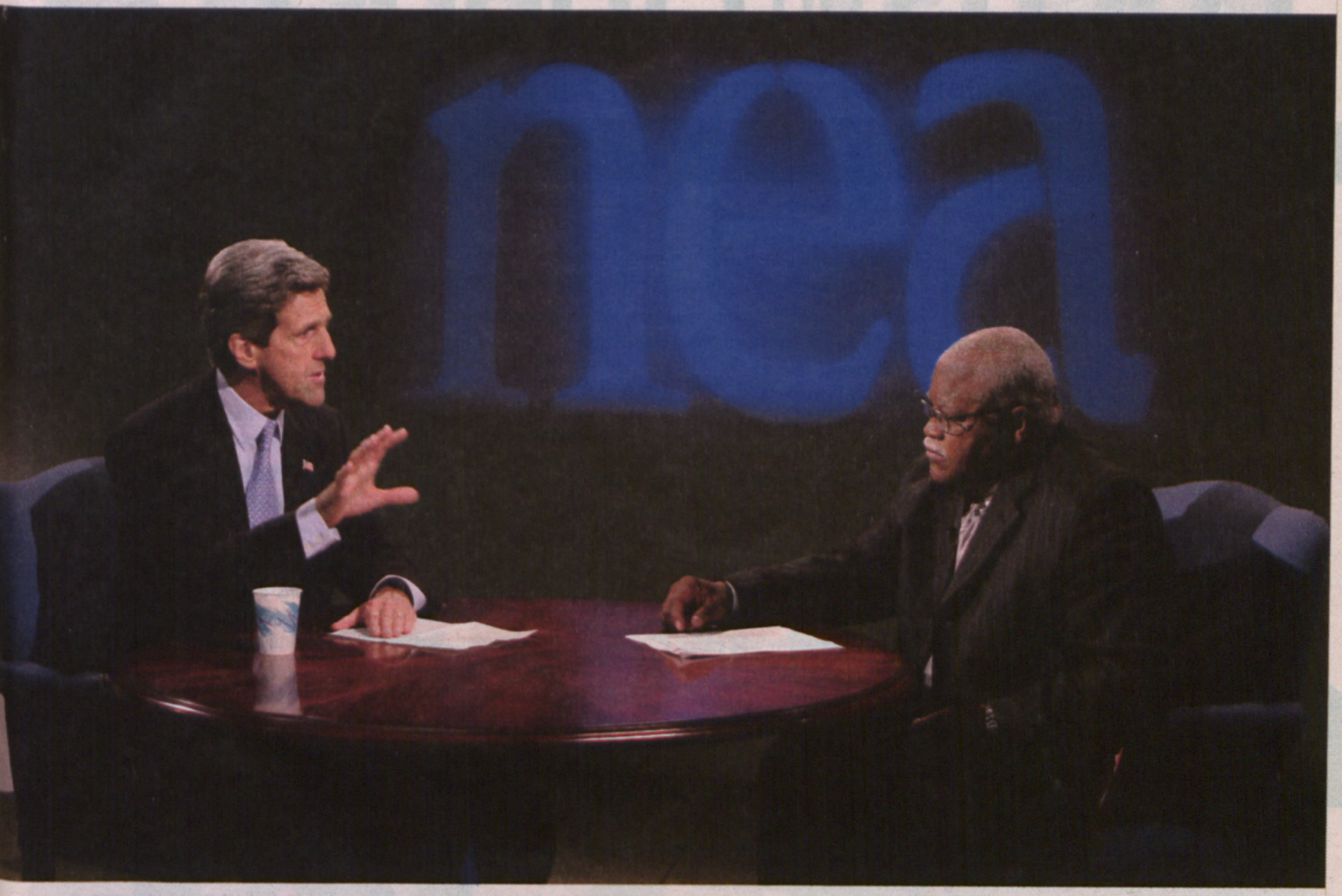
She invited me to go into her school and I met with teachers. I was stunned to listen to them telling me how they take $1,200, $1,500 out of their own salaries to put materials in front of their kids. I'm tired of politicians like George Bush who make photo opportunities out of children and then walk away from their responsibilities.

Are there areas where you would propose new federal initiatives?

KERRY: Too many teachers have told me stories of kids coming into the first grade with much more baggage than kids used to have. These kids can't recognize shapes or forms or colors. So the teachers have a terrible choice: How do you bring 8 or 10 troubled kids along and not handicap the whole class? How do you keep the whole class moving? We should not be presenting teachers with that choice. We know that early childhood education works. My wife helped in two schools in Pittsburgh where 25 percent of the kids in grades 1 to 4 were being held back. By funding an early childhood program, they reduced that down to 1 percent. I'm going to put in place an early childhood education plan called Zero to Eight, because if we focus on kids from zero to eight, they will learn for the rest of their lives.

That sounds like we'd need more teachers. But in many areas, they can't fill the positions they have now. What would you do about the teacher shortage?

KERRY: I intend to attract more teachers to the profession by helping to pay down student loans for those who go into urban centers and rural communities where it's particularly hard sometimes to attract the numbers of teachers that we need. Also, we're losing too many teachers in the first three or four years of teaching because they get beaten down. Politicians beat them down, school committees beat them down. Nobody respects them. Politicians have been picking on teachers, picking on the system, and not actually rolling up their sleeves and doing the hard work of making it number one.



NEA President **Reg Weaver** listens as **John Kerry** explains his views on public education.

How He Got the Nod

So how did Sen. John Kerry become NEA's recommended candidate?

After reading through questionnaires and interviewing the presidential contenders more than a year ago, the NEA PAC Council—made up of all state Association presidents, national officers, and heads of NEA member caucuses—developed a list of "acceptable" candidates based on their commitment to public education. Kerry was 1 of 10. President George Bush chose not to return the Council's questionnaire, so he did not get an interview.

After a studied analysis of the acceptable candidates and their positions on everything from child nutrition to the No Child Left Behind act, the PAC then unanimously asked the NEA's Representative Assembly (RA) to recommend that members support Kerry.

The RA made the final decision by a secret ballot vote in July, when 86.5 percent of the more than 9,000 delegates voted in favor of Kerry. The vote was well above the minimum of 58 percent required by NEA bylaws.

The current Administration says vouchers are the key to better education. What's your feeling?

KERRY: Ninety percent of America's children go to public school, so the only way to lift a generation is to guarantee that those 90 percent have the best education possible. There are great public schools in America. Presidents and senators and countless business tycoons have come out of them. We need to honor that and make every school as good as those public schools. When I'm President, you will never see a voucher proposal from my administration. Vouchers just strip away the commitment to the public education system. They're wrong. I will oppose them and if a voucher plan crosses my desk as President, I will veto it.

We in the NEA are educators, but we're also citizens of America. What's at stake for America in the decision that each of our members is going to make in November?

KERRY: This is the most critical moment in our nation's history since I returned from Vietnam in 1969. This Administration is radical—radical in the deficits they're creating, radical in the way their attorney general is stomping on civil rights, and in the way they're abandoning children. I bring to the table the ability to provide the national security, the military experience to reclaim the American flag and stand up for what's right for America.

And I also bring to the table 35 years of being involved in the domestic fights of our nation, the civil rights movement, and education. I can step into the shoes of commander in chief and keep faith with our educators, with our children, with our hopes and dreams for this country. nea

PHOTO: DRAKE SOREY

Focus on Finance

Information and helpful tips on managing your money.

Brought to you by NEA Member Benefits

Take the Bite Out of Your Family's Food Bill

Here are some simple ways to lower the cost of feeding your family without skimping on quality.

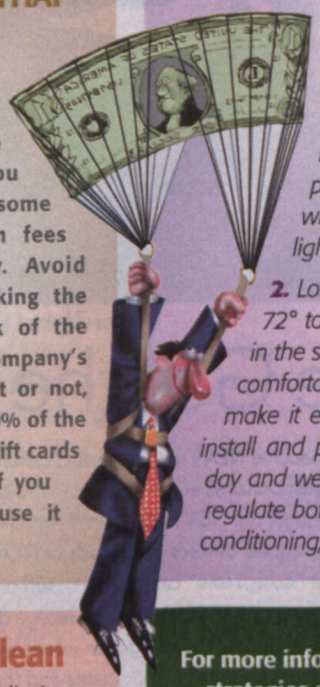
- *Use a savings club card. They're free at many supermarkets and offer special sale prices that are scanned at the register.*
- *Buy store brands. They offer big savings and similar quality to many national brands.*
- *Clip coupons from the Sunday paper. It's full of $1-off coupons for cereal and other items along with many buy one, get one free offers.*
- *Choose fresh over frozen or prepared foods. You'll get more for your money and they won't be full of added salt and chemicals.*
- *Freeze your leftovers. They're easy to heat up and are a smart alternative to expensive take-out meals when you don't feel like cooking after work.*

Extended Warranties– *Friend or Foe?*

When you make a big electronics or appliance purchase, you can expect to be offered an extended warranty. Consider these facts before deciding to pay for the extra protection. Many items, like electric ranges, top-freezer refrigerators, and analog camcorders, have a failure rate of only 8% in the first three years, the maximum term of most extended warranties. On products that take a lot of beating, like laptops, especially if you carry them with you often, the failure rate is nearly double, so it's easier to decide. One reason stores want you to take an extended warranty is because the profit margin on warranties averages 70%, while the margin on most of the products they cover averages only 10%.

Gift Cards That Keep Giving

Gift cards are easy to give and great to receive, but be cautious when you buy them because some come with hidden fees or expire quickly. Avoid surprises by checking the rules on the back of the card or on the company's Web Site. Believe it or not, on average up to 10% of the monetary value of gift cards goes unused. So, if you have a gift card, use it before you lose it.



The 10% Factor– *Beating Rising Energy Prices*

With the rising price of natural gas and electricity in the last year, it is estimated that the average household's heating bills have risen 10%. Here are two ways to knock your heating bills back down.

1. *Use caulk or weather stripping to stop the little drafts that can increase your energy bill by up to 10% – whether you're trying to keep your house warm or cool. Locate drafts by holding a lit incense stick around problem spots like doors, windows, outlets, recessed lights, and flues.*
2. *Lower your thermostat from 72° to 65° at night (or raise it in the summer)– you'll still sleep comfortably. Digital thermostats make it easy– they are simple to install and program, and have both day and weekend settings. They can regulate both heating and central air conditioning, if you have it.*

How to Polish Up Your Credit and Keep It Squeaky Clean

Poor credit affects many things—home ownership, interest rates, and credit limits. However, if you follow these helpful tips, you can help keep your credit clean.

1. Obtain an annual credit report, available from Equifax, Experian and TransUnion, and have any errors you find removed.
2. Pay all your bills on time and make at least the minimum payment due.
3. Keep account balances below your available credit limit to avoid paying penalties and higher interest rates.
4. Don't shy away from borrowing money altogether – an established credit history is key to getting future credit.
5. Don't apply for multiple loans or new accounts at the same time.
6. If you don't have any credit, establish it by applying for a gas, bank or store card.

These tips will help you look your best on paper, save you credit headaches, and net you a great credit profile for the future.

For more information on investment strategies and financial services for you and your family, visit the NEA Member Benefits Web Site at www.neamb.com.

Or call 1-800-637-4636

Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
(or Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) ET

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Sources: www.consumerreports.org, www.freddiemac.com, U.S. Dept. of Energy - http://www.eere.energy.gov/

CONT0904

From 'Just a Para' To Paraprofessional

Minnesota paraeducators opt for 'strength and knowledge' by joining the merged NEA-AFT state affiliate.

Duck if you dare call someone "just" a paper-copying, diaper-changing "para" when you're visiting Minnesota District 279, a multi-community suburban school system northwest of Minneapolis. That's because many of the education support professionals (ESPs) there do a whole lot more than many assume: They reinforce classroom instruction, stay after school to help students with homework, get kids safely on buses, and even remind them what materials to take home.

Para local leader **Becky Hespen**

Local organizer **Pam Cheney**

And some are mobile decision-makers, such as 13-year para Becky Hespen, who closely monitors what special ed students in a community-based vocational assessment and training program "can and can't do" in the workplace.

"Most of our paras want to excel at what they do," observes this veteran union activist, but, sadly, "they haven't gotten help from the district to do it."

The duties required of these ESPs had snowballed long before the so-called No Child Left Behind law (NCLB) mandated that Title I paras become "highly qualified." But District 279 never kept up with the times by offering para staff development, preparation for the state-administered ParaPro certification test, or any other path to professional recognition.

That all started to change in March, when District 279's long-independent paraeducator association voted to affiliate with Education Minnesota, the merged state organization of NEA and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

Affiliation proponents campaigned for "strength and knowledge" through the resources of a powerful statewide organization. Now a newly minted local, the 750-member Education Minnesota Osseo Educational Support Professionals (EMOESP), has the backing it needs to improve the paras' bargaining agreement and professional standing.

But there's plenty of hard work ahead, caution Hespen, the local vice president, and local membership coordinator Pam Cheney, a media/AV para at Osseo High School. EMOESP must bring in more members, bridge old staff divisions, and bargain, bargain, bargain.

Among other things, EMOESP will need to negotiate for ESP parity with teacher rights, a fairer pay scale, and meaningful staff development provisions.

Most of all, stress Hespen and Cheney, these paras will need to push for added respect on the job. On that score, "we can help this group," says Education Minnesota President Judy Schaubach. "Part of it can be done through bargaining, part through relationship building with administrators, and part through the backing of teachers. The support of teacher leaders of Education Minnesota Osseo has already been outstanding."

And much can be done by EMOESP members themselves, who have a track record of roll-up-your-sleeves advocacy. "We took care of ourselves," points out Cheney, "although it's kind of intimidating to handle a top-level grievance by yourself."

That too has finally changed. Education Minnesota has now assigned a field representative to assist the new local affiliate. "These are capable people," concludes Schaubach. "We just need to empower them for what they need to do."

—DAVE WINANS

'Iron Sharpens Iron'

Paraeducators in Minnesota District 279 don't stand alone anymore. By linking with the NEA-AFT-affiliated Education Minnesota, they now have:

Help with the No Child Left Behind law (NCLB). Education Minnesota has passed legislation authorizing "voluntary" para standards and portable certification, and runs workshops to prepare para members for the state ParaPro certification test.

"A lot of paras, in both independent groups and other unions, come to us for help because we're the ones who know about what's going on with NCLB," says Education Minnesota President Judy Schaubach.

New allies and new ideas. Besides enjoying the opportunity to network through state and national union conferences, this new affiliate becomes part of the ESP local "presidents' council" that advises Schaubach on ways to meet para needs.

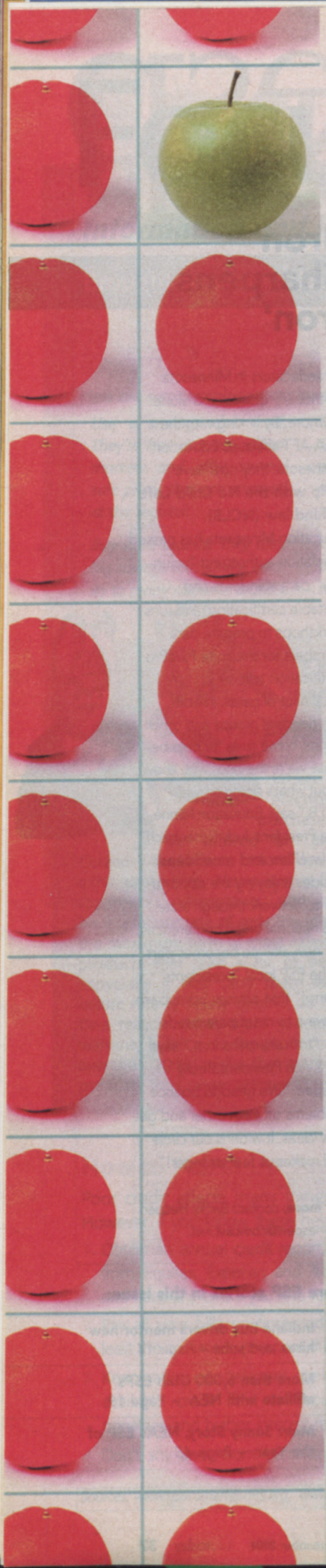
"Iron sharpens iron," says local Vice President Becky Hespen. "We need to bounce problems off each other and get new ideas. It widens our circle and makes us feel stronger!"

For more, contact Becky Hespen at bhespen@comcast.net.

More ESP stories in this issue:

- **Indiana bus drivers mentor new hires and subs** – *Page 14*
- **More than 6,000 Utah ESPs affiliate with NEA** – *Page 19*
- **Meet Sunny Story, NEA's ESP of the Year** – *Page 45*

PHOTOS: JANET HOSTETTER



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24 MONTHS	3.31% APY*	2.36% APY††	2.30% APY††	2.60% APY††
12 MONTHS	2.75% APY*	1.40% APY††	1.35% APY††	1.70% APY††
MONEY MARKET ACCOUNTS	NEA-SPONSORED MONEY MARKET 1.71% APY†	0.20% APY††	0.30% APY††	0.70% APY††

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††All other bank APYs shown in the comparison chart are valid as of 8/4/04; CD APYs are based on balances of $1,000 and terms shown; Money Market APYs are based on balances of $1,000 and yields may be higher for higher balances. Source: *Market Rates Insight*, 8/4/04.

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Union Power On Campus

Organizing to defend public higher education

Think public education is under assault only in grades K–12? Not so: Higher education is facing major attacks as well. And in Washington and other states, faculty are forming unions to defend themselves.

United Faculty of Washington State, affiliated with—and strongly supported by—NEA, AFT, and their state organizations, is campaigning to represent nearly 8,000 faculty at six public, four-year higher education institutions. Already it's paying off: In June, full- and part-time faculty at Central Washington University voted nearly 2-1 for United Faculty of Central, which is part of the larger statewide union. The bargaining unit includes 563 faculty, librarians, and coaches.

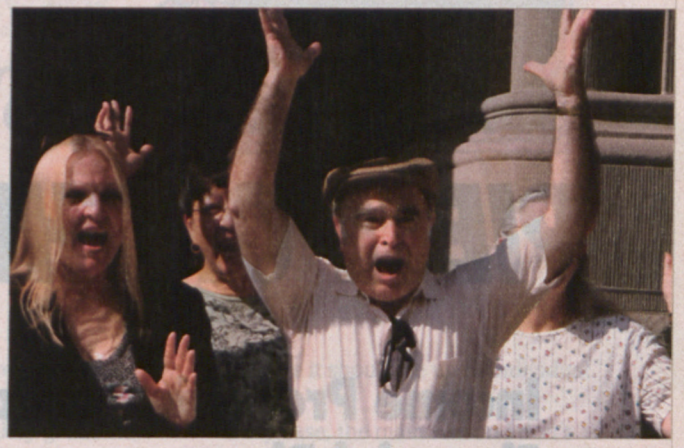
"This marks a new era," says Susan Donohoe, president of the United Faculty of Central. "Now we can work with the administration to help improve our wages and working conditions."

United Faculty of Central (UFC) organized in 1997, but the university refused to recognize it. Then in 2002, years of lobbying by AFT Washington and Washington Education Association (WEA) members culminated in passage of a law requiring four-year higher education institutions to recognize the union if a majority of the faculty votes for representation.

At stake? United support on the kinds of issues that resonate for educators everywhere. In Washington, many now say faculty can show strength in numbers when fighting at the state level for limits on class size and workload. And teachers will gain a stronger voice in academic governance, says Daniel CannCasciato, the UFC treasurer and a former faculty senate chair. "Up until now, we were empowered to recommend. People long ago got tired of that."

Now, faculty union advocates are spreading the message of "campus clout, statewide strength" at the other five campuses affected by the new law. Elections at Eastern Washington University and Western Washington University will be next. At Eastern, the administration voluntarily recognized United Faculty of Eastern in 1994. Now the union has filed for a certification election under the new bargaining law. Anthony Flinn, president of the union at Eastern, says politicians increasingly think of public colleges and universities as "state assisted" instead of "state supported," so support for higher education "gets elbowed aside" and schools are left to solicit corporate donors. "Is education a public or a private good?" he asks.

Charles Hasse, WEA president, says it's a critical question, given the trends in privatization of public education generally. "We need to stop those who would weaken these institutions and raid public funds for private purposes," he says.



Central Washington University faculty members got good news when the votes on union representation were tallied.

"While we have strong influence in two-year higher education," notes Sandra Schroeder, president of AFT Washington, "we have lacked strength in the four-year arena where the threat of privatization is very real. This challenge will demand a larger and more committed membership."

The NEAFT Report is a project of the NEAFT Partnership. A primary aim of the partnership is to keep members of NEA and the American Federation of Teachers informed about joint programs and areas of common concern.

Big Sky, Little Budgets

Teacher unity boosts 'adequate funding' in Montana.

"The legislature is more interested in tax cuts for corporations and high-income residents than in funding public schools. Then they can stand up and say in all honesty, 'We don't have the money.'"

So says Eric Feaver, President of MEA-MFT, a merged NEA and AFT affiliate, and the same could be said in many other states.

MEA-MFT has organized a powerful coalition of pro-education groups and school boards to file a lawsuit to make the state government live up to its obligation under the state constitution to provide a quality education for its children. Last spring a state district court judge ruled for the plaintiffs, but the state is appealing.

Similar suits have been filed in 28 other states. Each says the state is violating its constitution by not adequately funding education. Nineteen have met with success in court, although no state has achieved adequate funding yet.

Feaver says the four-year-old NEA-AFT merger in Montana made it possible to build the broad coalition that filed the lawsuit. "Before, the legislature sometimes was able to put a wedge between us," he says. "Now, we have one staff, one pot of money, one voice."

In East Helena, music and band teacher Vicki Ries says the state's negligence is all too clear. Two years ago, she says, the schools lost programs ranging from an advanced math course to part of her band program. A massive community fund-raising effort with bake sales, magazine sales, and a luau helped win back some of the programs, but class size is still up, some programs are still gone, and morale is terrible. "Politicians always claim children are their priority, but they don't back up their words," she says.

The lawsuit offers new hope. Feaver expects a state Supreme Court decision by the end of 2004. "We will not lose," he says.

PHOTO: KIM HUGHES

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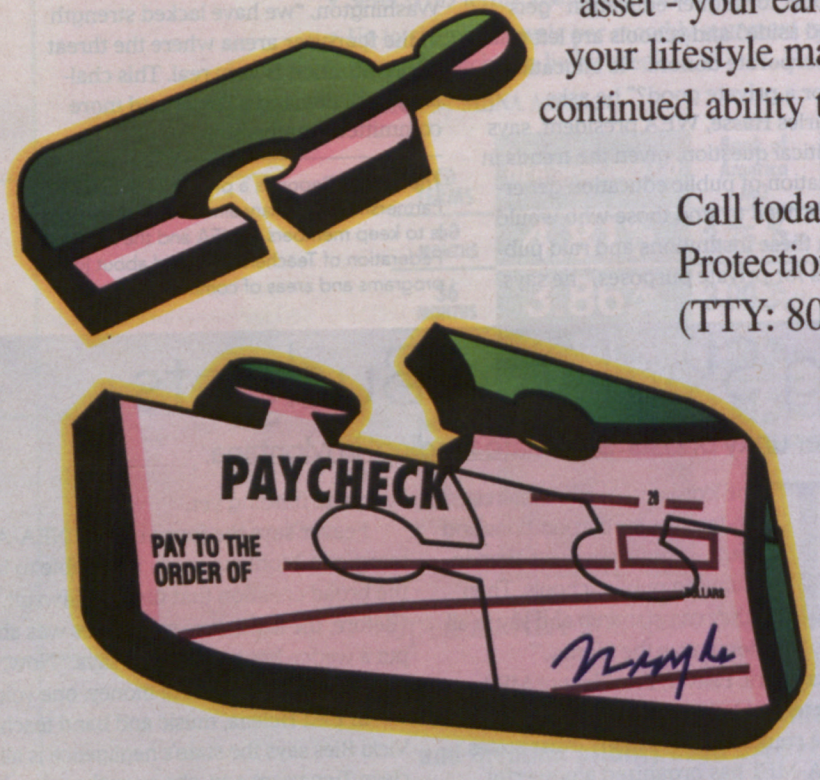

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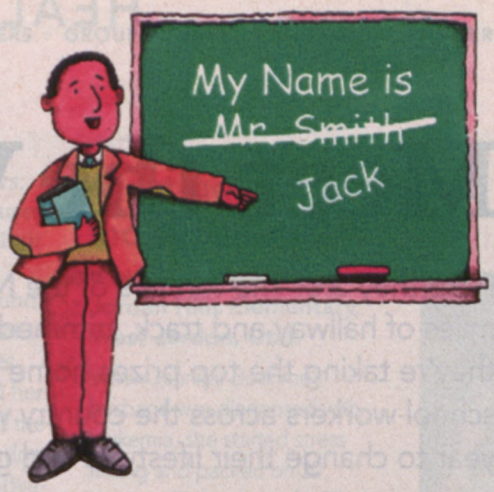
Should teachers allow students to call them by their first names?



YES

I have toyed with the idea of allowing my students to call me by my first name for several years now. People in most workplaces call each other by their first names.

In fact, high school students who work at a restaurant or a hardware store call their bosses by their first names. It's only in education that we maintain this sort of fake, out-dated practice.

Currently, I introduce myself to students in September with my full name. Students choose to call me "Mr. White" because that's the only way they have ever known to address a teacher.

However, I have heard students refer to me outside the classroom as "My teacher, Brian White." One time, a student referred to her "favorite teacher" as "Brian White" in a newspaper interview. I am happy that my students see me as a person with whom they have a working relationship, and are comfortable using my first name along with my last name.

I tell seniors that after they graduate, they are no longer allowed to call me "Mr. White." I tell them "Mr. White" is my dad, and I prefer "Brian." They appreciate the gesture.

I introduce myself to parents with my full name as well. I don't want to put up a pretentious wall between me and a parent.

Parents are receptive to using my first name, and I think this has opened up outstanding parental communication.

Perhaps a new, 22-year-old teacher, especially a female, should not have students use her first name. She may have enough difficulty establishing a professional relationship as it is.

I believe it should be up to individual teachers.

In my case, the main reason I don't encourage students to use my first name is that some of my colleagues would hate the idea. They would think I was trying to become "friends" with my students instead of maintaining a professional working relationship.

That would be an unfair assessment. I work very hard to maintain the line of professionalism between me and my students.

But I don't believe using a title and a last name generates respect.

Teachers who earn their students' respect can do so without regard to names.

BRIAN WHITE teaches chemistry and physics in Indianapolis, Indiana.

NO

I do not think it is appropriate for students in grades 1–12 to call teachers by their first name. It's okay for three- and four-year-olds in preschool. Three-year-olds are practically babies. It is acceptable for them to say "Miss Lisa" as opposed to "Miss Jankowski." They may not be able to pronounce what could be a three- or four-syllable last name. But even a three-year-old can say "Miss."

In elementary, middle, and especially high school, students should be obligated to address teachers, administrators, and adult visitors by Mr./Mrs./Miss. It shows respect and an imaginary line that should not be crossed. I am 24 years old and supervise two 18-year-old high school senior interns in my classroom. Though I may be close in age to them and friendly with them, I am their teacher first. They address me as "Mrs. Merrill."

I had a teacher in high school we called "George." Yes, George was the fun and free-spirited teacher, who is sadly missed, but looking back, I do not think George received the respect he deserved. He did not demand respect and therefore he got very little. Kids are kids. They knew they could walk all over him, so they were loud and obnoxious in class.

On the other hand, "Mr. Canton" was and still is a respected teacher. We didn't dare address him as "Tom."

We learned more from Mr. Canton than we did from George. We did our homework and we didn't fool around in class. His clothes, his whole presence in the school demanded respect. But did the name have anything to do with this? Of course it did.

Whatever happened to addressing your friend's mother as "Mrs. Davis"? Nowadays it's just "Janet." What about old "Miss Miller" down at the pharmacy? Now it's just "Betty."

Respect for elders needs to be brought back into the lives of youngsters. If they don't learn it when they're little, they won't have it when they grow up, and that can translate into disrespect for police, government, laws, and bosses when they go to work.

A little respect never hurt anyone, especially in this day and age.

KELLY MERRILL is a seventh-grade special education teacher in Millbury, Massachusetts.

ILLUSTRATION: SHIRLEY V. BECKES

Meet the Winners!

Here they are! The winners of the NEA Fitness Challenge have strolled and sprinted through miles of hallway and track, trimmed and slimmed with exercise and healthy diets. Now they're taking the top prizes home to their schools. The winners represent the hundreds of school workers across the country who took up the Challenge during the 2003–04 school year to change their lifestyles and get in shape.

BY SHEREE CRUTE

Surveys confirm it: Educators are at particularly high risk for obesity-related illnesses. So when hundreds of NEA members signed up for the Fitness Challenge last year, they knew they were embarking on something important. Not only could they lose excess pounds, they could lessen their chances for diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure. They could get better educated, too—and on issues of health, there's plenty to know.

Take obesity. Nobody understands exactly why school workers appear to have disproportionately high rates, but studies show stress plays a big role.

"Our research at Ohio State University has shown that people who are stressed metabolize fat more slowly," says Catherine Stoney, Ph.D, a research scientist at the Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine at the National Institutes of Health. That may not make you fat, Stoney says, but the body's levels of the stress hormone cortisol also shoot up when you're under pressure, encouraging the body to deposit more fat in certain areas, like the abdomen. Add that to high-fat, high-carbohydrate cafeteria and school vending machine fare, and you have a perfect recipe for weight gain.

"Weight management is very complex, "Stoney says, "but many factors are behavioral and we can control them." That, of course, is where the Challenge comes in. By making modest changes, Challenge members made extraordinary improvements in their health and well being. Here are their stories.

The Energized Eagles

CATEGORY:

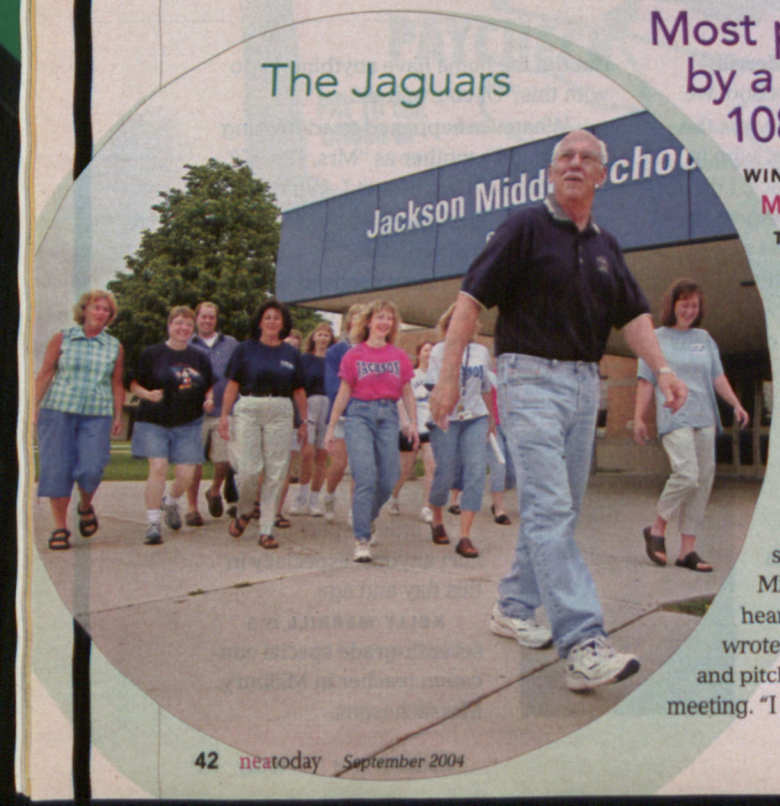
Most pounds lost by a team—108.25

WINNERS: The Mustang Muscles

TOP LOSERS: Jennie Finney, Susan Hoskins, Mary Plaster, Ron Ross; Stony Mill Elementary School, Danville, Virginia

The Mustang Muscles had their very own secret weapon: Susan Hoskins, Mustang team recorder. As soon as Hoskins, Stony Mill's guidance counselor, heard about the Challenge, she wrote up a two-page brochure and pitched the idea at a faculty meeting. "I thought teamwork would be great for morale," Hoskins says, "plus I thought it would help me maintain my recent 50-pound weight loss." She was right on both counts. Her final team of 12 took the prize for most pounds lost, with four top losers at the head of the pack. And Hoskins, 51, dropped another eight pounds.

The Mustangs discovered that moderate changes can produce dramatic benefits. "I dropped nine pounds," says Ron Ross, 50, the school's speech therapist. He was surprised to find that was enough to drop his high blood pressure 10 points into a healthy range. Mary Plaster, 58, a Stony Mill kindergarten teacher, lost eight pounds and found it helped give her the



The Jaguars

PHOTOS: BOTTOM LEFT, JANET HOSTETTER; TOP, ERIC HYLDEN; BOTTOM CENTER, KIM WALKER

"energy to keep up with the kids," as well as control her Type II diabetes. And Jennie Finney, 49, dropped 17 pounds by just "cutting back on carbohydrates and getting active." Enough weight to greatly improve her hypertension, her family's biggest health risk factor.

SUCCESS SECRET: "Now we laugh more. We became more caring and closer to each other while getting healthy," Plaster says.

CATEGORY:

Most miles walked by a team—3,030.1

WINNERS: The Jackson Jaguars
TOP WALKERS: Marjorie Adkisson, Amanda Herman, Frank Meuers, Kelly Ross; Jackson Middle School, Champlin, Minnesota

Beating genetic health risks and easing job stress kept the Jackson Jaguars' top walkers on the move all year. "My dad died after his fifth heart attack at 66," recalled team recorder Amanda Storey, 39. "I want to live longer than that."

Frank Meuers, a Jackson math teacher, used the Challenge as a way to add to the fitness regimen he developed after suffering a heart attack in 2002. "Even though the doctors declared me healthy, I wanted more," explains Meuers, who is in his early 60s. "I started out at two miles a day; I'm now up to four," says Meuers, who, like all Jaguar team members, used Jackson Middle School's lengthy halls (it has 2,400 students) as a track.

Jaguar walker Kelly Ross, 36, found the Challenge was "a great way to get us to work together." Ross, who teaches seventh and eighth grades, also said her workout cleared her head: "It helped me deal with all of the changes in education today." De-stressing was a great motivator for computer teacher Marjorie Adkisson, 58, as well. "It's just so peaceful walking outdoors," Adkisson says. "I get in touch with nature."

SUCCESS SECRET: "Just make it a habit," Storey says. "Your weight will take care of itself if you eat in moderation." Adds Meuers, "Remember, it's an investment in yourself."

CATEGORY:

Most inches lost by a team—40.5

WINNERS: The Energized Eagles
TOP LOSERS: Vicky Grove, Lynn Vatthauer; Lafayette High School, Redlake Falls, Minnesota

Lynn Vatthauer, Lafayette's French teacher and technology coordinator, has a talent for getting folks organized, so when she read about the Challenge, she was up to the test. "When I heard about the Challenge I thought, 'what a great way to kick off the year.'" She started off with a team of 10, but found that she and team member Vicky Grove were the ones most focused on inches and pounds lost, so they kept track together.

"I was walking regularly, but with age," says Vatthauer, 44, "I started gaining inches anyway." She'd trimmed seven by May.

"Between work stress and caring for my sick Dad," Grove explains, "I put on the pounds." She credits support with helping her drop 83 pounds and an amazing 33.5 inches from her frame since September.

SUCCESS SECRET: "Teamwork," Grove and Vatthauer agree. "We competed to see who ate the healthiest lunch and people scouted out the teacher's lounge to warn me off high-calorie treats," Grove says.

CATEGORY:

Most pounds lost by an individual—22

WINNER: Jennifer Boehme, Jordan Hills Elementary, West Jordon, Utah

When Jennifer Boehme's husband was diagnosed with leukemia, she started stress eating and packed on 20 pounds. That's when the 33-year-old sixth-grade teacher joined the Challenge. Boehme created innovative ways to get a workout—walking the perimeter of the hospital while her husband was getting treatments and riding an exercise bike they put in his hospital room.

CATEGORY:

Most inches lost by an individual—29.5

WINNER: Tom Grove: "the Beach Bobcat," Beach Elementary School, Portland, Oregon

A single moment captured on film changed Tom Grove's life for the better. His daughter took a picture of him—in profile—at his 50th birthday party. To beat that bulge, he joined the Challenge. Grove, a second-grade teacher, learned to control portions, fill up on vegetables and low-fat treats, and use a food diary. He also started walking—measuring out a course to and from school.

CATEGORY:

Most miles walked by an individual—3,694.9

WINNER: Jerry Brian: "Go Ghosts," Kaukauna High School, Kaukauna, Wisconsin

Speech pathologist Jerry Brian was just 48 when his doctor told him he had Type II diabetes and hypertension. He got so depressed, he went out for a walk. It felt so good, he did it again. Brian lost 100 pounds in two years and took on the Challenge to keep motivated and maintain his weight. He lost a few extra pounds and, last summer, took part in the Green Bay Marathon.

The Mustang Muscles

PHOTOS RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM: STEVE WILSON, CRAIG MITCHELLDYER, STEVE LEVIN

Teacher of the Year

"A house without books is like a house without windows."

That's what Kathleen Mellor's father told her when she started school. Mellor's father—who, like many of his generation, had to leave school to help support his family—urged his daughter to get an education so her hands wouldn't look like his.

"It was a defining moment in my life," says the 2004 Teacher of the Year. By the time she finished kindergarten, Mellor knew what she wanted to be when she grew up. "Teaching is an awesome responsibility," Mellor stresses, "because it has such a strong impact on so many people's entire lives."

Mellor's innovative ideas and love of teaching have had a powerful impact on the lives of her students, many of whom keep in touch with her long after they've graduated from high school. An ESL teacher in North Kingston, Rhode Island, Mellor designed and implemented an enormously successful program for a district whose ESL population tripled in one year.

When Mellor first took the job, all elementary and middle school children—regardless of age and ability to speak and read English—were bused to one school to receive ESL services together. Now, instead of being segregated into separate classes or schools, ESL students remain integrated in their home schools and are a shared responsibility between their ESL and content-area teachers. The program has become so successful, many ESL students make the honor society.

Despite her contributions, Mellor says she could never have imagined winning Teacher of the Year. "Teachers don't toot their own horns. Now I feel I can brag about my colleagues, how hard they work, and what a difference they make in the world!"

—SABRINA HOLCOMB

Latin Rhythms

José González practices what he preaches. Or, rather, what he teaches.

BY DAY, GONZÁLEZ TEACHES MUSIC TO AN AUDIENCE OF BUDDING MUSICIANS AT Sullivan Elementary School in Holyoke, Massachusetts. By night he's performing original melodies with one of his two Latin musical ensembles.

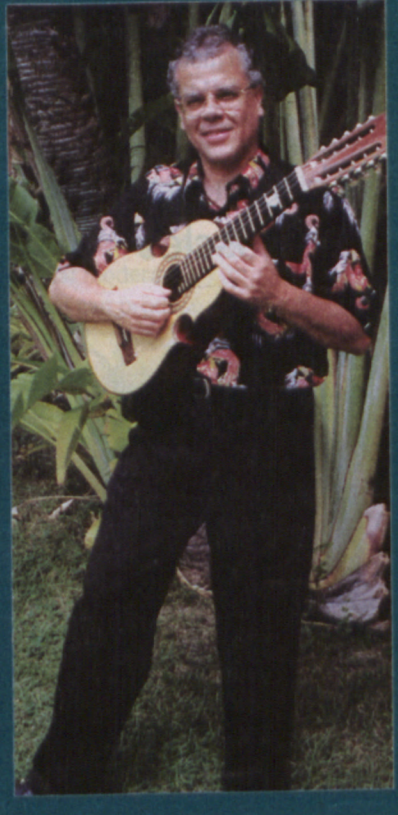
"We perform at everything that comes around," says González. "We love all of it." Everything that comes around includes nightclub gigs as well as concerts at nearby universities such as Princeton and the University of Massachusetts. González and his bands also offer educational workshops for all grade levels.

González, a guitarist and cuatro player, is a member of both Criollo Clásico, a four-member "world music fusion" ensemble, and Banda Criolla, an eight-member Latin band. Both groups release recordings—seven albums so far—on Criollo Clásico Music, a record label owned by González. The title track of González' latest CD, *Bomba Le Lé*, was recently released worldwide on the Putumayo World Music compilation *Latin Playground*.

Originally from Puerto Rico, González moved to Amherst, Massachusetts, so he could live and travel between New York and Boston to promote his music. He planned on teaching music until his music career took off. "Since I was moving to a new area and had two kids, I figured I would try teaching for a year or so," he says. "I found that I loved it."

That was 15 years ago. Now that his musical star has started to rise, González says he doesn't plan on giving up teaching. "I used to favor performing, but now I just have two careers."

—CHRIS KOTTERMAN



PHOTOS TOP: NATIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR PROGRAM; BOTTOM: CRIOLLO CLÁSICO MUSIC

ESP of the Year

"The first thing you have to do when you work with a child who's difficult is find out why you like him or her as a person; what quality is endearing."

So says Allyson "Sunny" Story, a paraeducator at the Grant Early Childhood Center in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. "Sometimes it's hard to find that quality in a child who's angry or aggressive, but I haven't found a child yet whom I can't love."

What began as a volunteer position 25 years ago has evolved into an incredible career helping troubled children. Story recently received the 2004 award for NEA Education Support Professional of the Year for her contributions to the lives of others.

Story, who earned the nickname "Sunny" because she was an extremely happy child, serves as both a mentor and a friend to her students. When a young girl was faced with the unexpected death of her mother, Story helped her deal with her grief and find a supportive foster home. She and Story still remain in contact.

Story has worked as passionately for her colleagues as she has for her students. She helped obtain salary increases for paraeducators based on levels of educational experience completed and was a member of the first class to complete state-approved courses for paraeducator certification.

Story stresses the importance of unity among all groups involved in public education because "we have so many battles to fight."

"I'm looking forward to building bridges that will form positive relationships among parents, educators, support professionals, and legislators."

—EMILY GOODMAN

Up to Any Challenge

Retiree Jerry Dixon can't resist a challenge. "The way I do everything is I just go and jump in the middle and start swimming," he says.

WHEN HE WAS 35 YEARS OLD, the Alaska adventurer was jumping out of airplanes to fight forest fires as a smokejumper for the U.S. Forest Service.

"A lot of people dream of growing up and being rich or famous," he says. "I dreamt of going to Alaska, living in the woods, building a cabin on the Yukon, and being a smoke jumper."

Dixon spent 20 years teaching gifted education in Alaska and met his wife, Deborah, herself a 30-year teacher, while teaching at an Inuit village there. During that time, they sold their car and got around using a dog team and a sled they received as a wedding present.

Throughout his 55 years, he has been an alpine ski racer in France, gone white-water rafting among icebergs, and written a book about the seven years he spent studying the South Fork Canyon in Idaho.

Since retiring, Dixon has not slowed down. Last summer, he retraced the steps of Lewis and Clark, taking three months to hike, bike, and paddle the 1,362-mile route. Next up is a 250-mile journey on skis across the Alaska Range, followed by a sailing trip in the Caribbean.

But despite a life brimming with adventure, he wouldn't trade his teaching days for anything.

"I grew to love teaching as much as I loved smoke-jumping," he says. "And that's saying something."

—CHRIS KOTTERMAN

GOT A TIP?

Do you have an interesting story idea? Contact Sabrina Holcomb, section editor, at **sholcomb@nea.org.**

PHOTO TOP: BETH HOLT; BOTTOM: KEVIN SMITH

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ANSWER: No doubt about it: roasted soy nuts. Twice the protein of peanuts, half the fat. Some oil, but the good kind. Relatively cheap.

JOHN TRACY *English as a second language teacher, Andover, Minnesota*

ANSWER: Apple with peanut butter. Core the apple. Fill each half with peanut butter. Stick the halves back together and tightly wrap the apple in plastic wrap.

JILL SAUTNER
Fourth-grade teacher, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

Classroom Drama

I have nine Alternative Behavior Unit students in my theater class, along with five regular education students. I am trying to find a drama/theater curriculum that will work for this class. Can someone help?

DONNA BUESSING
Middle school theater arts and Spanish teacher, Beaumont, Texas

ANSWER: I'd have the kids read short stories that have themes they can relate to on an emotional level and then have them act out the story. They could do this with or without a script. I'll bet the librarian can suggest some short stories.

LISA ELLIOTT *Shawnee, Kansas*

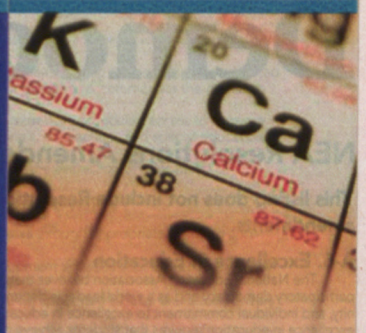
ANSWER: Try dramatizing Aesop's Fables. I have used this material for grades four through six, including adjustment classes. I would feel comfortable using it for seventh and eighth as well. You may take the role of narrator, or allow the students to do so. This unit has worked well for me with some challenging students. Good luck!

SUSAN TANSEY *Elementary music teacher, Wareham, Massachusetts*

Silence Isn't Golden

I have a sustained silent reading group, 13 kids, for 25 minutes at the end of every day. Most of them are less than excited about reading silently. I've tried reading aloud, but they just aren't interested. I am not a literacy teacher. Are there activities they can do while listening and still get something out of being read to? Are there alternative activities that give the same benefits as silent reading or reading aloud?

SARAH TSIOPLAKIS
Middle school health teacher, Portland, Maine



Periodic Plus

I am looking for a good Web site on the Periodic Table.

FRANCES JOLLEY
Computer lab facilitator, East St. John High School, Reserve, Louisiana

TRY: www.webelements.com. My ninth graders just finished a project on an element and used this site. It includes a picture of what the elements look like at room temperature and interesting facts about them.

NOREEN SCARPITTO
Reading, Massachusetts

Character Course

We are looking to start a half-year Character Education course for freshmen and sophomores. What types of programs are out there for this grade level?

MIKE KEHOE
Tulelake, California

Share your wisdom, ask your question!

What's the silliest piece of paperwork you have to fill out?

Send your answers to these or other questions on this page to **ajehlen@nea.org.** Or, send us a question you'd like to see posted. Please include your name, your job, and the community and state where you work.

For a weekly email of questions, answers, and practical classroom tips, join Works4Me, one of the NEA's most popular and useful services. Just send the message "subscribe Works4Me" (without the quotation marks) to **Lyris@list.nea.org.**

ILLUSTRATION TOP: JANNINE CABOSSEL; ILLUSTRATION MIDDLE: LEVAN/BARBEE STUDIO; ILLUSTRATION BOTTOM: ROBERT NEUBECKER; CARTOON: HARLEY SCHWADRON

Democracy in Action

NEA Resolutions Amended at the 2004 RA

This listing does not include Resolutions adopted with editorial amendments.

A-6. Excellence in Education

The National Education Association believes that continued success of the United States as a participatory democracy and as a world leader is dependent upon a shared national, state, community, and individual commitment to excellence in education. The Association also believes that excellence in education requires that students achieve mastery of learning so that they have the ability to use what has been taught and have command of subjects sufficient for problem solving, decision making, and further educational growth. The Association supports high standards for teaching and learning in which the student becomes an active participant in the mastery process.

The Association further believes that sufficient resources, interventions, and program alternatives must be provided for the proper placement of each student. (1983, 2004)

A-13. School Accountability

The National Education Association supports effective and fair school accountability systems. The Association believes that these systems must promote high levels of student achievement and ensure that the best teaching practices are supported and utilized. The Association also believes that the focus of the accountability system must be on the school, not on individual stakeholders, as the unit for evaluation and improvement of student learning. Development and implementation of the accountability system must ensure that the stakeholders at the school, district, state, and national levels share the responsibility for establishing clear goals, adopting high standards for student achievement, establishing multiple measures of student success, and providing adequate and equitable funding and support systems.

The Association further believes that a school accountability system must—

a. Promote educational excellence
b. Ensure the alignment of standards, assessments, and curricula
c. Balance its focus on school context, process, and student performance
d. Set high standards for student learning, levels of support by each stakeholder, and clearly defined goals for the school as a unit
e. Provide for the development and implementation of a valid methodology for use as an assessment tool to determine the required funding necessary to enable all students to achieve educational excellence
f. Provide professional development for all education employees prior to implementation of the system
g. Use multiple assessment tools and sources of data that are meaningful, relevant, valid, and reliable
h. Include necessary accommodations and modifications to maximize the success of all students
i. Include measures to improve school accountability
j. Identify how the school as a unit achieves its goals
k. Identify the quality, quantity, and impact of support provided by each stakeholder
l. Identify and address the internal and external factors that impact student learning and development
m. Provide for the timely dissemination of assessment results to all stakeholders
n. Be applied in a fair and equitable manner
o. Include periodic evaluation and modification of the system
p. Provide for the development of a school improvement plan.

The Association believes that the school improvement process must, as a minimum—

a. Involve all school staff as active partners in the development of the plan
b. Provide the additional funding, resources, and assistance necessary to accomplish the plan
c. Identify the responsibilities of each stakeholder—students, education employees, parents/guardians, community members, government, policymakers, social agencies, and taxpayers—in the implementation of the plan
d. Provide time for planning, implementation, and reassessment
e. Be consistent with education employees' rights and responsibilities as set forth in laws, contracts, policies, and/or local agreement processes. (1971, 2004)

A-14. Financial Support of Public Education

The National Education Association believes that every state should ensure its students a quality education by providing the funding needed to enable all students to achieve educational excellence. Such an education requires adequate and equitable funding from public tax sources for schools to obtain the resources (e.g., personnel, programs, materials, buildings, and technology) to meet the needs of all students. The Association also believes that—

a. An increasing portion of public funds should be for direct instruction of students.
b. The amount of aid must be generally predictable for long-range planning and specifically predictable for year-to-year planning.
c. Present programs of specific aid must be expanded and improved by consolidation and simplification of administration.
d. Tax revision favorable to public education should be encouraged and continually reviewed at every governmental level.
e. Local governing boards must be fiscally independent, and restrictive limits must not be imposed on their budgets or long-term borrowing.
f. The state and local share of finance must be derived from a tax system that is balanced and complementary in nature, includes all broad-based taxes, reduces the excessive reliance on property taxes, and protects subsistence income.
g. Provisions must be made for research, development, implementation, continuation, and improvement in education practices. Funding must be included for resources such as personnel, time for staff planning, training and professional development, facilities, equipment, and materials.
h. State and federal mandates affecting public education programs must be accompanied by adequate and equitable funding.
i. School trust lands must be administered with the generation of funds for public education as a primary goal and in a manner that ensures the sustainable use of those lands by current and future generations. State school trust funds should be fairly compensated by the federal government for school trust lands included in national parks, monuments, or wilderness areas.
j. Efforts should be made at the state and federal levels to ensure stable, adequate, and equitable funding of public schools historically receiving revenues derived from state and federal lands and natural resources. These efforts should include, but not be limited to, ensuring the sustainable use of these public lands and resources by current and future generations.
k. Additional funding must be provided to cover the cost of achieving the goals of raising student performance, implementing new programs, and raising standards of student learning.
l. Funding should be greater for students facing social, economic, and/or education challenges.
m. Funds must be provided for programs to alleviate race, gender, and sexual orientation discrimination and to eliminate portrayal of race, gender, sexual orientation and gender identification stereotypes in the public schools.
n. Public funds must not be expended for any materials used to promote race, gender, or sexual orientation and gender identification stereotypes and/or biases.
o. Public funds must not be expended in institutions where either specific programs or the institution has been found guilty of discrimination.
p. Categorical funding must be assured in areas such as special education, bilingual/English as a second language, class size reduction, and the economically/educationally disadvantaged.
q. Any institution, agency, or individual receiving financial aid from federal, state, or local governments must adhere to all applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations.
r. Full-day, every day kindergarten programs should be fully funded.
s. Federal, state, and as appropriate, local governments should provide funds sufficient to make pre-kindergarten available for all three- and four-year-old children.

The Association opposes providing any public revenues to pre-k through 12 schools for sectarian instruction. The Association also opposes providing such revenues to sectarian and nonsectarian pre-kindergarten through 12 private schools or to nonpublic school students in pre-kindergarten through 12 education, unless such revenues are used for educational services that are not available in public schools to which students have reasonable access. (1997, 2004)

A-30. Acceptable Charter Schools and Other Nontraditional Public School Options†

The National Education Association supports innovation in public education. The Association believes that acceptable charter schools, which comply with Association criteria, and other nontraditional public school options have the potential to facilitate reforms, such as decentralized and shared decision making, diversity in educational offerings, and the removal of onerous administrative requirements. By developing new and creative methods of teaching and learning that can be replicated in mainstream public schools, these schools may be agents for positive change. The Association also believes that, when concepts such as charter schools and other nontraditional school options are proposed, affected public education employees should be directly involved in the design, implementation, and governance of these programs.

The Association further believes that plans should not negatively impact the regular public school program and must include adequate safeguards covering contract and employment provisions for all employees, voluntary participation, health and safety standards for all students and employees, nondiscrimination and equal educational opportunity, staffing by licensed education professionals, and financial responsibility.

The Association believes that programs must be adequately funded, must comply with all standards for academic assessment applicable to regular public schools, must include start-up resources, must not divert current funds from the regular public school programs, and must contain appropriate procedures for regular periodic assessment and evaluation, as well as adequate attendance and record keeping procedures.

The granting of charters should be consistent with the following principles:

a. Charter schools should serve as a laboratory for field-testing curricular and instructional innovations and/or to provide educational opportunities for students who cannot adequately be served in mainstream public schools.
b. Charter school programs must be qualitatively different from what is available in mainstream public schools and not just an avenue for parental choice.
c. Local school boards should be the only entity that can grant or renew charter applications.
d. The criteria for granting a charter should include a description of clear objectives, missions, and goals. Renewal of a charter should be contingent on the achievement of these objectives, missions, and goals.
e. Appeals of local school board decisions in charter applications should be made to a state education agency but appeals should be heard only on the grounds of arbitrary, capricious, or unreasonable decision making, not on the educational judgment of the local school board.
f. Private, for-profit entities should not be eligible to receive a charter.
g. Charter schools should have a limited right to contract with for-profit entities for services only to the extent that mainstream public schools can do so.
h. Charters should not be granted for the purpose of home schooling, including providing services over the Internet to home schooled students.
i. Charter schools should be nonsectarian in nature. Particular care should be exercised in granting charters to any religious institutions.
j. Private schools should not be able to convert to charter school status. If state law allows such conversions, the chartering agency should ensure that the converted school is significantly different in student body, governance, and education program than its predecessor. This assurance should be especially vigorous in the case of schools with prior religious affiliation.
k. Charters should be granted for a limited period with five years being the norm.
l. Charter schools should be monitored on a continuing basis and the charter should be subject to modification or revocation at any time if the children's or the public's interest is at stake.
m. Charters should not be granted unless the chartering agency is satisfied that adequate startup resources will be available.

Charter schools should be designed and operated in accordance with the following principles:

a. Charter schools may have flexibility within the requirements of law dealing with curriculum, instruction, staffing, budget, internal organization, calendar, and schedule.
b. Charter schools should be required to meet the same requirements as mainstream public schools with regard to health and safety, public records and meetings, licensure/certification of teachers and other employees, finance and auditing, student assessment, civil rights, and labor relations.
c. Teachers and education support professionals should be considered public employees.
d. Teachers and education support professionals should have the same constitutional and statutory rights as other public employees.
e. Charter schools should be subject to the same public sector labor relations laws as mainstream public schools and charter school employees should have the same collective bargaining rights under law and local practice as their counterparts in mainstream public schools.
f. Students should not be charged tuition or required to pay a fee to attend a charter school.
g. Students should not be involuntarily assigned to attend a charter school.
h. Charter schools should have some discretion in selecting or rejecting students if they are designed to serve a targeted student population. Students shall not be screened on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and/or gender identification, English-language proficiency, family income, athletic ability, special needs, parental involvement in school affairs, intellectual potential, academic achievement, or cost of educating the student. Indirect screening such as denying admission because of the cost of transportation of a student shall not be permitted.

†See the NEA Handbook for the Policy Statement on Charter Schools adopted by the 2001 Representative Assembly.

i. Charter schools should meet the needs of at-risk students and those students requiring special education services.
j. Employment in a charter school should be voluntary. Employees in conversion charter schools should be afforded an opportunity to transfer to a comparable position at another mainstream public school.
k. Charter schools should not disproportionately divert resources from mainstream public schools. Charter schools should receive the same amount of money as a comparable mix of students in a mainstream public school. Adequate funds must be available for capital expenditures such as buildings and equipment that do not come from the operating budget of the charter school or the host district. (1993, 2004)

B-4. Color-Blind Students

The National Education Association believes that the needs of all students, including color-blind students, must be met. All educational materials which use color coding for referencing information should be accompanied by an alternate method of identifying these items of information such as numbering or labeling the names of each color.

The Association encourages preservice preparation and staff development for education employees that present strategies for working with color-blind students. Such training should also address sensitizing instructional staff to the needs of color-blind students. (2004)

B-15. Discriminatory Academic Tracking

The National Education Association believes that the use of discriminatory academic tracking based on socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, or gender must be eliminated in all public school settings. The Association urges its affiliates to oppose these practices. (1988, 2004)

B-18. Student Peer Mentoring Programs

The National Education Association supports student peer mentoring programs that provide incoming students the opportunity to make a smooth transition to new schools. The Association believes that student peer mentoring programs should be supervised by appropriate staff and/or administration. Such programs should be student-based and ongoing. (2004)

B-19. Education of Refugee and Undocumented Children and Children of Undocumented Immigrants

The National Education Association believes that, regardless of the immigration status of students or their parents, every student has the right to a free public education in an environment free from harassment. The Association supports access to higher education for undocumented students and access to financial aid and in-state tuition to state colleges and universities in the state where they reside. The Association also believes that the determination of legal residency status is the responsibility of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, not of educational systems or their employees.

The Association further believes that students who have resided in the United States for at least five years at the time of high school graduation should be granted amnesty by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, granted legal residency status, and allowed to apply for U.S. citizenship. (1980, 2004)

B-22. Alternative Programs for At-Risk and/or Special Needs Students

The National Education Association recognizes that there must be increased development and maintenance of alternative programs to meet the needs of at-risk and/or special needs students, pre-k through adult. The Association recommends early and appropriate identification and placement of these students. Teachers and administrators should receive necessary training in diagnostic processes and alternative methods of teaching and learning. Appropriate training should also be provided to education support professionals. In addition, parents/guardians and other school community members should be encouraged to acquire the training to effectively meet the needs of these students.

Programs should emphasize a broad range of activities for responding to students' differing behavioral patterns, interests, needs, cultural backgrounds and learning styles. These programs must be evaluated on stated objectives and standards. Teachers in these programs must have a major role in designing the objectives and evaluations and working with appropriate school and community personnel to execute these objectives and evaluations.

The Association believes that at-risk students who are assigned to an alternative placement due to discipline issues should be required to exhibit regular attendance and adequate academic and behavioral progress, in accordance with an individual program, prior to their return to a regular educational setting.

The Association also believes that the rights of students who are protected under the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act must be preserved.

The Association urges its affiliates to seek adequate compensation, planning time, materials, and facilities for teachers and counselors in these programs.

The Association supports the efforts of its affiliates to negotiate and legislate for the training of teachers seeking additional certification and hiring of an increased number of teachers with education in special areas.

In higher education settings, faculty and education support professionals who are working with special needs students should be provided with appropriate resources to accommodate these students' special requirements.

The Association encourages its state affiliates to seek legislation that would require any person offering services to remediate, correct, or ameliorate reading, speech, language, behavioral, emotional, or learning disabilities, or related problems to be licensed under regulations of each state's department of public instruction or other appropriate agency. (1977, 2004)

B-26. Education for All Students with Disabilities

The National Education Association supports a free, appropriate public education for all students with disabilities in a least restrictive environment, which is determined by maximum teacher and parent/guardian involvement. There must be a full continuum of placement options and services/delivery models available to students with disabilities. In order to implement federal special education legislation effectively, the Association recognizes that—

a. A fully accessible educational environment, using appropriate instructional materials, support services, and pupil personnel services, must match the learning needs of both students with and students without disabilities.
b. Student placement must be based on individual needs rather than on available space, funding, or local philosophy of a school district. Student placements must be examined on a regular basis to ensure appropriateness whereby all needed services and support will be provided and should not be made disproportionately by ethnicity or gender. Necessary building/staff modifications must be provided to facilitate such placement.
c. Regular and special education classroom teachers must have a major role in determining an individual education program (IEP) and the appropriateness of educational methods, materials, professional development, and supportive services and must receive a copy of the IEP.
d. Regular and special education teachers, pupil personnel staff, administrators, education support professionals, and parents/guardians must share in planning and implementing the IEP. Prior to implementation, all necessary educational materials, professional development, and supportive services must be provided.
e. Students with physical disabilities and/or medical needs requiring nursing procedures must have their medical needs met by certified/professional school nurses.
f. All impacted staff members must have an appeal procedure regarding the implementation of the IEP, especially in terms of student placement. The procedure must include the right to have the dissenting opinion recorded and attached to the IEP.
g. Suspension and expulsion policies and practices used by local education agencies must be applied consistently to both students with and students without disabilities where misconduct is shown to be unrelated to either the disabling condition or to improper placement.
h. A plan recognizing individual differences must be used in a systematic evaluation and reporting of program development.
i. Limitations must be made in class size and/or case loads, using methods such as weighted formulas, modified scheduling, and/or curriculum design to accommodate the demands of each IEP.
j. All teachers who serve students with disabilities must have scheduled access to resource personnel, instructional assistants, paraprofessionals, co-teachers, and special education teachers.
k. The student's IEP should not be used as criteria for the evaluation of education employees.
l. Communications must be maintained among all involved parties.
m. Staff must not be reduced.
n. All staff must be adequately prepared for their roles through appropriate licensing and ongoing professional development programs.
o. Incentives for participation in professional development activities should, as mandated by law, be made available for education employees.
p. Education employees, as mandated by law, must be appointed to local and state advisory bodies on special education.
q. Education employees must be allowed to take part in the U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services on-site visits to states. Education employees should be invited to these meetings.
r. Local affiliates and education employees must be recruited, trained, and involved in monitoring school system compliance with federal special education legislation.
s. Adequate release time or funded additional time must be made available so that teachers can carry out the increased demands placed upon them by federal special education legislation.
t. Collective bargaining and other means should be used to minimize the potentially severe impact on staff that results from the implementation of special education legislation.
u. Benefits for staff working with students with disabilities must be negotiated through collective bargaining agreements and must be honored.
v. Full funding must be provided by local, state, and federal governments. (1978, 2004)

B-35. Foreign/World Language Education

The National Education Association believes that the acquisition of a second language is a vital part of the educational experience and that those who leave school speaking more than one language will be more competitive in the global marketplace. The Association also believes that the cumulative hours of exposure to the target language during a student's educational career is the most important determinant leading to fluency in a second language. Students should have the opportunity to acquire age-appropriate foreign/world language skills from an integrated curriculum throughout the pre-kindergarten – higher education experience.

The Association supports the maintenance of current programs and the further encouragement and development of foreign/world language instruction and international studies at all educational levels.

The Association recognizes the need for teacher preparation programs for foreign/world language teachers and supports teacher and student exchange programs. (1981, 2004)

B-40. Physical Education

The National Education Association believes that physical activity and exercise are essential for good health and must be encouraged during the developmental years of students. The Association also believes that a comprehensive program of physical education should be provided daily in grades pre-k through 12 in or on facilities designed for that purpose. Physical education programs and curricula should follow national standards as set forth by the appropriate professional organizations; should be developmentally appropriate, sequential, cooperative in nature, and culturally sensitive; and should—

a. Emphasize physical activity, fitness, exercise, and good health; skills of sports, games, dance, and basic movement; and related concepts and knowledge
b. Assess students, including physical fitness testing, as a culmination of preparatory activities
c. Provide for the special needs of students with low fitness, physical disabilities, or learning disabilities
d. Be taught by teachers licensed in physical education
e. Be taught with the same student/teacher ratio as other grade-level class sizes. (1991, 2004)

B-56. Conflict Resolution Education

The National Education Association supports the adoption and use, at all educational levels, of proven conflict-resolution strategies, materials, and activities by school districts, education employees, students, parents/guardians, and the school community to encourage nonviolent resolution of interpersonal and societal conflicts.

The Association recognizes the importance of students having the appropriate social skills necessary to participate in a democratic society. Programs that teach the skills of positive social interaction should be incorporated into academic programming. (1986, 2004)

B-59. Standardized Testing of Students

The National Education Association believes that standardized tests and/or assessments should be used only to improve the quality of education and instruction for students. Standardized tests, whether norm-, criterion-, or standards-referenced, can validly assess only a limited range of student learning. Therefore, they should be only an adjunct or supplement to information obtained through school- and classroom-based assessment conducted by teachers for purposes of supporting and strengthening instruction as well as for summarizing and evaluating student learning. Standardized tests are most useful when designed by the educational professionals closest to the classroom and integrated with assessment information specific to local programs. Affiliates should advocate for, and states and test designers should employ, a variety of developmentally appropriate assessment techniques that allow necessary accommodations, modifications, and exemptions and are bias-free, reliable, and valid. When a test and/or assessment is mandated at the local, state, or national level, it should be reviewed by a panel of appropriate subject area specialists and teachers to ascertain the relevance of the test to the subject area and be used only to evaluate a program's effectiveness toward meeting local, state, or national standards and/or goals.

The Association also believes that, in order for standardized achievement tests and/or assessments to support quality education—

a. Standards must be prioritized to support effective curriculum, instruction, professional development, and assessment.
b. Stakeholders must determine high priority standards. These standards must be clearly and thoroughly described so that the knowledge and skills students need to demonstrate are evident.
c. Valid results of assessment of high-priority standards must be reported standard-by-standard for each student, school, and district.
d. The breadth of the curriculum must be monitored to ensure that attention is given to all standards and subject areas, including those that are not assessed.
e. Progress should be continually monitored to ensure that assessments are appropriate for the purposes for which they are intended.

The Association opposes the use of standardized tests and/or assessments when—

a. Used as the criterion for the reduction or withholding of any educational funding
b. Results are used to compare students, teachers, programs, schools, communities, and states
c. Used as a single criterion for high-stakes decision making, such as graduation requirements or grade promotion
d. The results lead to sanctions or other punitive actions
e. Arbitrary standards are required

f. They do not match the motor skills and/or academic developmental levels or language proficiency of the student
g. Student scores are used to evaluate teachers or to determine compensation or employment status
h. Programs are specifically designed to teach to the test
i. Testing programs or tests limit or supplant instructional time
j. Every student is required to be tested every year
k. Students and parents/guardians are not provided with a complete report of the individual student's test results
l. Time required to administer the test exceeds reasonable and appropriate limits for the age of the student
m. Test preparation impedes or discourages learning, constrains the curriculum in ways that threaten the quality of teaching and learning for students, or limits and/or curtails future educational opportunities of learners
n. Scores are used to track students
o. Students with special needs or limited English proficiency are required to take the same tests as regular education students without modifications and/or accommodations.

The administration of a standardized test and/or assessment includes the responsibility to educate the stakeholders about the purpose of the test, the meaning of the test results, and the accurate interpretation of its conclusions. The Association further believes that students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, schools, and school districts should not be penalized for parents/guardians exercising their legal rights to exempt their children from standardized tests and/or assessments. The Association believes that states should be encouraged to make test items public after they are no longer used. (1978, 2004)

B-61. School Libraries/Media Programs

The National Education Association believes every student must have a comprehensive library/media program within his or her educational setting. This program should include print and non-print resource materials, instruction in library research and information skills, necessary technology, licensed librarians/media specialists, and education support professionals.

The Association encourages increased funding for library/media programs from federal, state, and local governments as well as other sources such as public/private partnerships. (1980, 2004)

B-62. Media

The National Education Association believes that the media has a significant effect on the education of the public. The Association also believes that the media has an obligation to provide full, constructive, balanced, and accurate presentations to the public. The Association further believes that the concentration of media ownership within a limited number of individuals or corporate entities is not conducive to the presentation of divergent views and opinions.

The Association supports the media's right to protect information and sources of information from mandated disclosures and search and seizure.

The Association believes that media should be accessible to all. Visual media should include closed captioning for the deaf/hard of hearing and read-along captions on children's commercial and educational programs. (1969, 2004)

B-63. Technology in the Educational Process

The National Education Association believes that technology in the educational process improves the learning opportunities for students, improves the quality of instruction, and improves the effectiveness of education employees. Technology can provide opportunities to reduce educational inequities.

The Association supports increased federal, state, and local resources, along with public/private partnerships, to fully fund equipment purchases/leases/upgrades, maintenance, technical support, training, evaluation, and staffing to support the full use of technology in public schools, public colleges, and universities.

The Association also believes that—

a. Education employees must have access to necessary technology for managing and advancing instruction. Such technology must be compatible with and on at least the same level as technology in general use outside education. Further, education employees should be provided training, encouragement, time, and resources to experiment with and to research applications of technology in order to integrate technology into the curriculum.
b. Education employees, including representatives of the local affiliate, must be involved in all aspects of technology utilization, including planning, materials selection, implementation, and evaluation. Additional preparation time and ongoing technological support must be granted to teachers using technology to enrich their instruction. Further, classroom teachers, higher education faculty, and library/media specialists must have collaborative planning time.
c. Teacher preparation in instructional technology, including the development of effective materials, and appropriate instructional strategies must be included in college and university programs.
d. Ongoing professional development must be provided for education employees in the use, integration, and applications of technologies to enhance instruction.
e. Students must have access to and instruction in technology and the responsible use of technology. Further, there must be equity in training, funding, and participation for all students.
f. Instructional technology should be used to support instruction and must be directed by a licensed teacher.
g. Instructional technology should be used to improve the learning opportunities for students, the quality of instruction, and/or the effectiveness of education employees, rather than to reduce positions, hours, or compensation.
h. The evaluation of education employees in any technological program should be conducted openly, be tailored to the medium, and meet the requirements of the local collective bargaining agreement or evaluation policy.
i. The impact of technology, telecommunications, and distance education on education employees should be subject to local collective bargaining agreements.
j. Education employees' participation in distance education must be mutually established in employer policies, locally negotiated agreements, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment for education employees.
k. Equity and freedom of access to information unimpeded by geographic, economic, social, or cultural constraints is essential. (1981, 2004)

B-66. Communication Between Hearing and Deaf/Hard of Hearing People

The National Education Association believes that the lack of communications between hearing and the deaf/hard of hearing has detracted from the potential of a broadly distributed group to contribute fully to our total society.

The Association recommends that instruction be given to hearing students, staff, and administrators that will help them understand the unique needs of all deaf/hard of hearing people and will help hearing students, staff, and administrators communicate with deaf/hard of hearing people.

The Association also believes that American Sign Language should be offered as a foreign/world language elective credit at both high school and college levels.

The Association further believes that educational sign language interpreters/transliterators must be qualified professionals who are licensed, state credentialed, or nationally certified. (1974, 2004)

B-68. Transfer of Student Records

The National Education Association supports the development of an effective process for the transfer of student records. To expedite the confidential information exchanges between schools when students transfer, the process should follow a national format designed by educational and legal professionals. This process must protect the rights of students and should facilitate the continuity of their education.

The Association believes that school and education employees must receive information that indicates—

a. Educational plans, goals, specialized programs, and/or services
b. Assessment data
c. Attendance and cumulative records
d. Immunizations and health needs
e. Legal stipulations/restrictions
f. History of disciplinary incidents and violence-related behavior. (1980, 2004)

C-5. Family Stability for Children

The National Education Association believes that it is in the best interest of all children to live in a secure and stable family environment. Every effort should be made to provide a family with the supportive services it needs to allow it to stay together and care for the child in a safe, non-abusive and nurturing environment.

In the case of custodial and non-custodial parents, the Association recognizes the vital role both parents can play in the development of their children. The Association encourages the judicial system to recognize the crucial role both parents can play in that development when legally appropriate.

In consideration of these roles, the placement of children should be determined by a number of qualitative and quantitative standards that are both measurable and without regard to either parent's gender.

If a child's immediate family and/or extended family is unable to care for him or her, the Association also believes that the child may need temporary foster care while, at the same time, efforts are made to work with the family toward reunification with the child.

The Association further believes that parents who place children in foster care must be accountable for their efforts to rehabilitate themselves and indicate, through their actions, that they are working toward the return of the child to the home.

The Association believes that, if it becomes clear that a family is not able to make a home for a child and is unable to resume parenting, efforts should be made for the legal release of the child for adoption. (1984, 2004)

C-13. Protection of Infants with Disabilities

The National Education Association believes that infants born with mentally and/or physically disabling conditions are entitled to receive medically necessary treatments and services that are appropriate and consistent with the patient's needs and that, in accordance with accepted standards of practice, cannot be withheld without adversely affecting the patient's condition or the quality of the care. These treatments and services should be accompanied by the appropriate rehabilitation and life learning skills. (1985, 2004)

C-24. School Guidance and Counseling Programs

The National Education Association believes that guidance and counseling programs should be integrated into the entire education system, pre-kindergarten through higher education. Such programs should be provided through a maximum counselor/student ratio of 1:250 by appropriately certified and/or licensed school counselors who have been trained to support students in realizing their full potential in all areas of growth and achievement. School counselors should spend at least 80 percent of their time providing guidance and counseling services to students. (1987, 2004)

C-26. Safe and Orderly School Climates and Communities

The National Education Association believes that a safe and effective school climate is necessary for promoting educational excellence in public schools. The Association also believes that all education employees, parents/guardians, students, school governing boards, and community members and agencies must work cooperatively to establish and maintain safe and orderly school communities. Students and education employees must be safe from physical, verbal, and psychological violence, the threat thereof, and all forms of harassment. There must be procedures to prevent and eliminate all types of harassment that might occur. Plans and procedures regarding discipline and/or harassment must include due process.

The Association further believes that both schools and school districts must have written discipline plans and procedures that are fair, equitable, and consistently enforced as well as procedures for the safe and orderly conduct of school activities and events. The Association believes that there must be written safety plans for crisis situations. Crisis plans must be developed at each school site by school personnel, administrators, students, parents/guardians, community members, and emergency personnel. Plans must include stress management/counseling strategies as follow-up care for students and staff when crisis situations occur. These crisis plans must be provided to police and fire departments and other community agencies that might be called upon in a crisis situation. Parents/guardians must be made aware of the existence of these crisis plans.

The Association also believes that students must be taught strategies and skills, including conflict resolution, that develop respect, self-discipline, and self-control. Students must learn to distinguish between their own rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of others. There must be appropriate services and placement within regular education and alternative education programs and/or with state and/or community agencies for students who disrupt the learning environment or who are dangerous to other students, education employees, and themselves.

The Association further believes that appropriate school behavior begins and is reinforced in the home. Parents/guardians of children who are disruptive often need support and training in order to reduce inappropriate behavior and increase student learning. Programs that provide assistance and training in child development, effective parenting skills, and strategies for dealing with disruptive students must be available for parents/guardians. Schools can be instrumental in identifying and recommending strategies that can assist parents/guardians. The Association believes that a safe and effective school has a positive environment in which education employees, students, parents/guardians, and the community care for, communicate with, respect, understand, and trust each other. (1994, 2004)

C-40. Juvenile Offenders

The National Education Association believes that juvenile offenders who are convicted of serious crimes and who are contained in detention centers should be provided a healthy environment conducive to positive social change.

The Association also believes that these juveniles, while in this environment, should be provided with education programs and other support services that will enable them to become contributing members of society. Teachers of these youths must be prepared to provide instruction in life skills and learning skills.

Juvenile offenders who pose a threat to the health and safety of others and who are not placed in these centers should be provided educational services in an appropriate alternative setting rather than the regular public school setting.

The Association supports the placement of juveniles who are not charged with any offense or those who are status offenders in separate facilities from those persons who are charged with criminal offenses.

The Association also supports adequate funding for programs that provide alternatives to incarceration, discourage recidivism, and engage juveniles in positive behavior management activities and community-based rehabilitation that include counseling and community services. (1988, 2004)

D-10. Mentor Programs

The National Education Association believes that mentor programs are a means of enhancing the professional expertise of employees and retaining quality educators. The Association also believes that the planning, implementation, and evaluation of such programs must be negotiated or cooperatively developed and maintained by the school district and the local affiliate.

The Association further believes that the duties and responsibilities of all parties must be clearly defined and uniformly administered. Mentors must be selected through a defined process

with articulated criteria, be properly trained and compensated, and be provided with adequate time to fulfill their responsibilities. The state or local authority has the obligation to provide hold-harmless protection.

The Association believes that any documentation that results from the mentoring process must be confidential and the sole property of the person mentored and must not be included in the participant's personnel file. The Association also believes that any verbal conversations that result from the mentoring process must also remain confidential. (1988, 2004)

E-4. Development of Curriculum

The National Education Association believes that to provide the highest quality of education to all students, educators must be the primary voice in the planning, development, implementation, monitoring, and refinement of curricula.

The Association also believes that careful consideration must be given to the curriculum in regards to—

a. Student academic standards
b. Alignment of curriculum with standards
c. Unwarranted duplication of content
d. Prevention of content gaps
e. Content overload
f. Developmentally appropriate content
g. Appropriate accommodations and modifications for students with special needs.

The Association further believes that educators must have an active role in the establishment of procedures for the planning, development, implementation, monitoring, and refinement of curricula. To that end, professional time and training must be provided. (2003, 2004)

E-5. Development of Materials

The National Education Association believes that public school teachers and postsecondary faculty should be involved in the development and field testing of all educational materials offered for adoption or purchase by public school districts and educational institutions. Materials in all subject areas should include strategies that encourage student interaction, be developmentally appropriate, include appropriate accommodations and modifications for students with special needs, be free of stereotypes, address divergent points of view, contain sufficient activities to teach the concepts, and provide for the evaluation of higher level thinking skills.

Where school districts and educational institutions involve teachers and faculty in the development of any educational materials, participation should be voluntary and compensated. (1984, 2004)

F-43. Color-Blind Employees

The National Education Association believes that the needs of all employees, including color-blind employees, must be met. All educational materials that use color coding for referencing information should be accompanied by an alternate method of identifying these items of information such as numbering or labeling the names of each color. (2004)

F-60. Medicare

The National Education Association believes in comprehensive health insurance for retirees. The Association also believes that Medicare is an important part of access to health care. The Association further believes that Medicare must be available as a universal guaranteed benefit that includes affordable prescription drug coverage and benefits for home healthcare and mental health services. (1999, 2004)

G-3. Licensure

The National Education Association advocates rigorous state standards for entry into the teaching profession. As established by professional standards boards, these standards must include each of the following:

- high academic performance;
- extensive clinical practice experience; and
- demonstrated knowledge of subject matter, pedagogy, and child development.

Every candidate, including those entering via alternative routes, should meet every standard prior to being granted a teaching license.

Assessments used to measure teacher skill, knowledge, and instructional competency must be valid and unbiased and should be included as one element of comprehensive assessment for completion of a teacher preparation program as well as for licensure into the profession.

The Association opposes licensure processes that lower or eliminate any of the standards outlined above, including "testing-only" approaches to teacher licensure.

The Association asserts that a teaching license should signify that an individual entering the teaching profession is competent to teach. A teaching license must be recognized as the primary requirement for employment in every public and private school (K through 12). No license should be issued unless an individual possesses the entry-level knowledge and skills required for teaching. No emergency licenses should be issued. No assignments should be permitted outside the teacher's area of licensure without appropriate concurrent retraining supported by the local district.

The Association urges the elimination of state statutes/regulations that require teachers to renew their licenses. Where such renewal continues to be required, standardized literacy and basic skills tests to determine competency should not be used.

The Association supports regulations that would put professional educators, the majority of whom are licensed and practicing public school teachers, in state licensing agencies.

The Association also supports the periodic evaluation of licensure procedures to ascertain whether cultural, economic, gender, racial, or age bias is perpetuated by the requirements for licensure. (1985, 2004)

H-3. The Right To Vote

The National Education Association believes that the principle of one-person—one-vote must apply at all levels of government, including the election of the President of the United States.

The Association recognizes the right to vote as a constitutional right guaranteed to all eligible citizens. The Association supports the continued maintenance of the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The Association also supports voting and absentee provisions that are simplified, accurate, reliable, and verifiable for all elections. The Association further supports voter education programs and uniform registration requirements without restrictive residency provisions. (1971, 2004)

I-9. Human Rights

The National Education Association believes that the governments of all nations must respect and protect the basic human and civil rights of every individual, including equal access to education as embodied in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Association condemns any action that limits or prohibits the free and responsible exercise of these rights and believes that all education employees must lead in the effort to prevent any encroachment on basic human and civil rights.

The Association also believes that the U.S. government should withhold all forms of military aid to governments that violate these rights.

The Association further believes that violence is abhorrent. The Association also condemns violence, as well as the tolerance of violence, and believes that all nations must pass and enforce measures to curtail and prevent actions and practices that inflict pain, suffering, mutilation, or death, and offer asylum to those threatened by such actions.

The Association expresses concern that the utilization of trade sanctions on food and medical supplies by any nation of the world to achieve political objectives fails to adequately consider the possible humanitarian impact of those policies on the civilian populations of the affected nations, particularly the young, the elderly, and the poor.

The Association deplores the holding of hostages, all forms of torture, and the taking of human life in the name of making a political statement. The Association believes that it is the responsibility of all governments to discourage such actions by individuals or groups of individuals.

The Association calls upon all nations to release all education employees and students who are being held without charge and to refrain from the use of coercion and arbitrary detention to punish the people of a specific area of their territories.

The Association further condemns the practice of capital punishment in nations without judicial safeguards such as the presumption of innocence and/or the right to counsel.

The Association also expresses concern that the practice of capital punishment in the United States impacts individuals disproportionately on the basis of social class, race, ethnicity, and gender. The Association supports ongoing efforts to review the practice of capital punishment for inequities based on these and other factors.

The Association opposes any local, state, or federal law; Executive Order; and/or amendment to the U.S. Constitution that curtails or infringes on basic human rights. (1977, 2004)

I-10. Civil Rights

The National Education Association is committed to the achievement of a totally integrated society. The Association calls upon Americans to eliminate—by statute and practice—barriers of race, color, national origin, religion, philosophical beliefs, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, disability, size, marital status, and economic status that prevent some individuals, adult or juvenile, from exercising rights enjoyed by others, including liberties decreed in common law, the Constitution, and statutes of the United States. Civil order and obedience to the law must be ensured without abridgment of human and civil rights. All individuals must be assured a speedy and fair judicial process with free legal counsel for those in need. To be effective citizens, individuals must be trained and aided in developing strategies and expertise that will enable them to operate effectively in a democratic society.

The Association opposes any local, state, or federal law; Executive Order; and/or amendment to the U.S. or state constitutions that curtail basic civil rights. (1969, 2004)

I-20. Invasion of Privacy

The National Education Association believes that every individual has a right to privacy. The Association continues to be concerned about the indiscriminate surveillance of citizens or groups by private and public agencies or individuals, especially the posting of addresses, phone numbers, and/or travel routes of individuals on Internet Web sites. The Association condemns the use of information gathered and stored and the exchange of such information, including library patron, medical, e-mail, and credit card records, without explicit release from the person or persons involved.

The Association also believes that rights to privacy and confidentiality must be guaranteed through federal and state legislation. (1970, 2004)

I-23. Sexual Assault

The National Education Association believes that all members of society should be protected from becoming victims of sexual assault. The Association also believes that it is a violation of the victims' right to privacy to release the names of the victims or to have their past sexual history admitted as evidence in assault cases. The Association supports fair and equitable treatment by health, hospital, and law enforcement agencies for sexual assault victims. The Association further believes that access to necessary services/programs must be made available to victims and their families. These services must be funded by appropriate government agencies.

The Association believes that states should develop a systematic process for gathering evidence when such assaults occur and supports the use of DNA testing as a means to identify perpetrators of sexual assault. The Association also believes in the importance of counseling and rehabilitation for the assailant, and the protection of due process rights for both the victim and the alleged assailant. (1981, 2004)

I-25. Bullying

The National Education Association believes the school environment must be free from all forms of bullying. Bullying is the systematic and chronic infliction of physical hurt and/or psychological distress on one or more individuals. The Association recognizes that bullying in schools is not limited to students, but can include members of the entire school community.

The Association encourages its affiliates to work with local school districts and institutions of higher education to develop comprehensive school-wide programs including all stakeholders to address bullying. Such programs should—

a. Establish strong policies prohibiting bullying that include the definition, consequences, and procedures for reporting and appeals
b. Develop and implement educational programs designed to help students recognize, understand, prevent, oppose, and eliminate bullying
c. Provide training for all school employees in bullying prevention and intervention
d. Provide professional development materials and resources.

These programs should be reviewed, revised, and updated to reflect changing needs. (2004)

I-48. Linguistic Diversity

The National Education Association believes that, although English is the language of political and economic communication in the United States, efforts to legislate English as the official language disregard cultural pluralism; deprive those in need of education, social services, and employment; and must be challenged.

The Association recognizes the importance of an individual's native language and culture and the need to promote and preserve them through instruction, public service announcements, and all other forms of communication. (1987, 2004)

I-53. Businesses Owned by Minorities and/or Women

The National Education Association believes that businesses owned by minorities and/or women should be encouraged. The Association also believes that the federal government should initiate and continue policies that encourage businesses owned by minorities and/or women. (1989, 2004)

I-54. Integration in the Public Schools

The National Education Association believes that it is imperative that full integration of the nation's schools be effected.

The Association recognizes that acceptable integration plans will include affirmative action programs and a variety of devices, such as geographic realignment, pairing of schools, grade pairing, and satellite and magnet schools. Some arrangements may require busing of students in order to comply with established guidelines adhering to the letter and spirit of the law.

The Association urges its affiliates to encourage school boards to study and consider seriously the negative impact on minority students when schools located in minority neighborhoods are targeted for closing.

The Association will assist its affiliates to assure that education employees, parents/guardians, and students are involved in the development of plans designed to achieve integration. The Association also believes that state and federal agencies should provide funds necessary to implement integration programs, including funds for student transportation. The Association also urges participation in citizen advisory committees—consisting of members designated by the local education association, parents, and representatives of community organizations, business, clergy, and media—that reflect the ethnic makeup of the community in developing, implementing, and evaluating student desegregation plans.

The Association further believes that integrated schools must provide students with equal access to all curricular and extracurricular programs and to technological equipment and knowledge.

The Association opposes any attempts to delay or impede implementation of desegregation orders and will, therefore, resist all efforts to resegregate integrated schools. The Association also opposes any governmental attempts to resegregate public schools through any means, including vouchers, charters, and other school-choice initiatives.

The Association will continue to oppose vigorously the systematic displacement or demotion of minority, especially Black, teachers and administrators to achieve integration. The Association further opposes actions of boards of education to finance integration plans through reduction of school staff. In addition, the Association will oppose the capricious reassignment and displacement of Hispanic teachers and administrators because of desegregation and bilingual programs. (1969, 2004)

sept '04

resources

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54 **On the Web** Great sites for Hispanic and Spanish-speaking students.
54 **Diversity Calendar** A day to highlight the importance of reading.
57 **On TV** A four-hour series examines the origins of Earth.
58 **In Print** A guide to books that can change teens' lives.
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60 **Books by NEA Members** Teaching children self-control.
61 **Read Across America** A new resource packet offers posters and a CD-ROM.
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62 **What's up at HIN** First responders offer tips to schools on being prepared for a crisis.

Start the School Year Right with a Grant from The NEA Foundation

What creative ideas would you like to try in the classroom? How can you and your colleagues grow professionally?

Whatever your needs might be, The NEA Foundation's **Innovation** and **Learning & Leadership Grants** can help.

All members who are practicing K–12 public school teachers, education support professionals, or higher education faculty and staff at public colleges and universities are encouraged to apply for a grant from The NEA Foundation. We now offer bigger and better grants—up to $5,000 per project—to fund your BIG ideas.

And, there's still time to submit a grant application by the **September 15** review date to The NEA Foundation. Applications are accepted on an ongoing, year-round basis for both Innovation Grants and Learning & Leadership Grants, so it's never too late to apply. But if you apply by September 15, you will know if your grant is approved by February 15. If the September date is too early for you, start working on a proposal now for our next review date of February 1. Grants fund activities for 12 months from the award date.

THE NEA FOUNDATION
FOR THE IMPROVEMENT of EDUCATION
www.nfie.org

NEA members just like you have applied for and received over 1,500 grants throughout the years. Read about their projects at www.neafoundation.org and then submit your own idea. Innovation Grants and Learning & Leadership Grants are available for all subjects, including the arts, literacy, science, and technology.

Applying for a grant is easy, so why wait? Visit www.neafoundation.org today for more information, including guidelines and an application. Or call 202-822-7840.

NEA URBAN GRANTS

Since 1985, NEA's Urban Grants Program has supported local affiliates in the development of education reform leadership programs for PreK–12/Graduate School faculty and education support professionals. Each year NEA awards 25 Urban Grants in the amount of $5,000 each to NEA local affiliates to support them with these programs.

The NEA Urban Initiatives Unit administers the program and looks for proposals that contribute to restoring public confidence in public education by reflecting some aspect of NEA's Strategic Priorities which include:

- Student Achievement
- Teacher Quality
- Education Support Professional Quality
- School System Capacity
- Public, Parental, and Business Support
- Association Capacity Building
- Administrative Services and Program Support.

NEA local affiliates of 500 members or more who are listed with the NEA membership office or the largest local NEA affiliate of any state regardless of membership number are eligible to apply. Applicants must submit a proposal postmarked by **September 30** to the NEA Urban Initiatives Office, 1201 16th Street N.W., Washington, DC 20036. For information on applying and on the review process, go to www.nea.org/teachers/urbangrants.html. Selections are made based on the following criteria. Proposals must:

- Have an application that is complete and adheres to all instructions
- Comply with NEA policy
- Benefit the local Association
- Involve local members in the project
- Have objectives that are

Grants for Student Chapters

Building a strong presence on campus is one of the biggest challenges that NEA Student Program chapters face. NEA provides financial assistance in the form of SOAR (Student Organizing and Assistance Resources) grants to encourage efforts to recruit new members or organize a student chapter.

Chapters may apply for funding to recruit in the following areas:

- **Urban institutions**
- **Minority populations and historically minority campuses**
- **Community colleges**
- **High school future teacher programs.**

Priority is given to student locals working with UniServ units.

For more information and an online application, go to www.nea.org/student-program/programs/soar.html.

attainable and measurable
• Promote partnership and collaboration with school districts and other stakeholders
• Demonstrate innovation, originality, and creativity
• Meet identified needs
• Show potential for successful completion and replication
• Have a timeline for activities that is adequate for successful completion of project
• Use funds appropriately; estimate costs realistically
• Confirm that project can continue after monies end.

Decisions by the Evaluation Committee are final. Questions should be directed to NEA Membership and Organizing/Urban Initiatives at 202-822-7155 or via e-mail at urbaned@nea.org.

SCIENCE & MATH COMPETITION

The Siemens Westinghouse Competition, a leading research-based science and math competition, is open to all senior high school students who would like to submit an individual or team research project in science, mathematics, engineering, and technology, or in combinations of these disciplines.

The competition, sponsored by the Siemens Foundation, awards college scholarships ranging from $1,000 to $100,000. The scholarship may be used for any part of a student's post high school education, including books, tuition, room and board, etc.

In addition, each high school with a regional finalist will receive a $2,000 award to be used to support science, mathematics, and technology programs within the school.

The deadline for entries is **October 1, 2004,** 5 p.m., ET. Instructions for entering the competition can be found at the Siemens Foundation site, www.siemens-foundation.org.

SEARCHING FOR CITIZEN-SCHOLAR-ATHLETES

Wendy's is looking for the nation's top high school citizen-scholar-athletes. High school administrators are encouraged to nominate two high school seniors, one male and one female, who maintain good grades, play sports, and volunteer in their community.

Twelve National Finalists will be selected and invited to the Wendy's High School Heisman National Awards Banquet in New York City, and their high schools will receive a $1,000 award in their name.

Among the finalists, two National Award Winners will also be honored during ESPN's national telecast of the college Heisman Memorial Trophy presentation. Winners will receive a trophy and a $2,500 award for their high school.

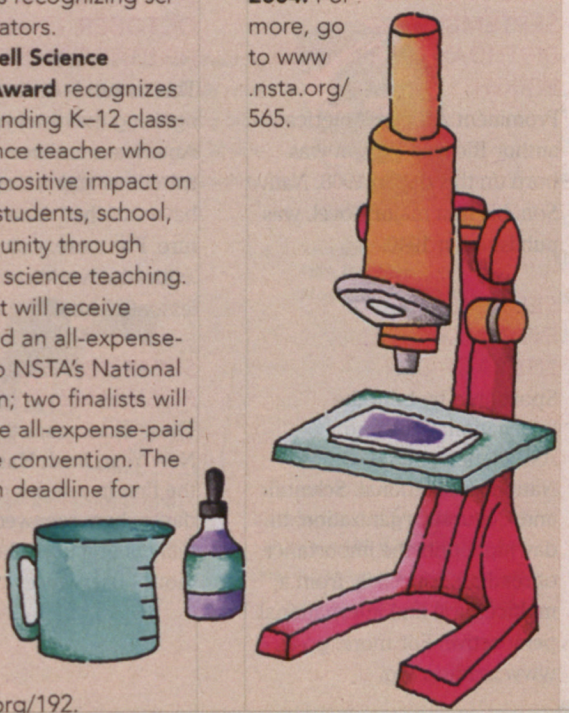
Nominations should be completed online at www.wendyshighschoolheisman.com. All nominations must be submitted by **October 1, 2004**. For more, visit the site or call 800-244-5161.

FOR SCIENCE EDUCATORS

The National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) is accepting nominations for two awards recognizing science educators.

The Shell Science Teaching Award recognizes one outstanding K–12 classroom science teacher who has had a positive impact on his or her students, school, and community through exemplary science teaching. One finalist will receive $10,000 and an all-expense-paid trip to NSTA's National Convention; two finalists will also receive all-expense-paid trips to the convention. The application deadline for the 2005 award is **November 15, 2004.** For more, go to www.nsta.org/192.

NSTA is also accepting applications for the 2005 **Delta Education/CPO Science Inquiry-based Science Teaching Excellence Awards.** Full-time, K–12 science teachers who successfully use inquiry-based science to enhance teaching and learning in the classroom are eligible to apply for an award in three grade categories: elementary (preK–5); middle level (6–8); and high school (9–12). A judging committee chosen by NSTA will select winners. The application deadline is **October 15, 2004.** For more, go to www.nsta.org/565.



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On The Web

GREAT SITES FOR HISPANIC SCHOLARS

It's not too early to start working on those college applications. Hispanic students considering college should visit the **Hispanic Scholarship Directory (www.scholarshipsforhispanics.org),** a project of NEA and the National Hispanic Press Foundation. The site includes links to more than 1,000 sources of financial aid, application guidelines, an alumni section, and a database of scholarships searchable by categories, including state, college, and field of interest. Many scholarships listed are available not only to U.S. citizens but to any student of Hispanic descent, regardless of nationality. Another good site to visit is the **Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Education Center (www.chci.org),** which includes a college preparatory kit to assist college-bound students in the admissions process. The site also features a list of scholarships and programs for Hispanic students, information on financial aid for parents, and tips on how to complete college applications.

SPEAK UP

Students can make their voices heard by visiting the redesigned and improved Voices of Youth (VOY) Web site, a youth community site

created by UNICEF. Here, young people from around the world can explore, discuss, and partner on issues related to human rights and social change through e-discussion boards, guidelines, and news. Go to www.unicef.org/voy/.

FIRSTGOV IN ESPAÑOL

Looking for government information in Spanish? FirstGov en Español, the U.S. government's official Spanish-language portal, contains more than 110,000 pages of federal and state government resources in Spanish. The site makes it easy to register to vote, file a consumer complaint, or apply for student financial aid. The site also contains a directory of more than 80 federal agencies that can answer questions in Spanish and a list of more than 200 free government publications

in Spanish on federal benefits, taking care of kids, and traveling safely, to name a few. Go to www.espanol.gov or call 800-333-4636.

MATERIALS FOR SPANISH TEACHERS

Looking for fun ways to teach your elementary school students Spanish? The Cervantes

DIVERSITY CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 4—BIRTHDAY OF RICHARD WRIGHT

Prominent African-American author Richard Wright was born on this day in 1908. *Native Son,* his first major novel, was published in 1940.

SEPTEMBER 8—INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY

Sponsored by both the International Reading Association and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, this day highlights the importance of reading, especially from a multicultural and international perspective. For more, go to www.reading.org.

SEPTEMBER 15–OCTOBER 15—HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

This month is dedicated to recognizing the history of Hispanic Americans and how their contributions and achievements have enriched American culture. For more, visit www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson023.html.

SEPTEMBER 15–16—ROSH HASHANAH

These dates mark the Jewish New Year. Rosh Hashanah is the first in a series of high holy days where renewed responsibility is practiced through religious observance.

OCTOBER

OCTOBER 1–31—POLISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

The official month to celebrate the achievements of Polish Americans and their contributions to American history and society.

OCTOBER 9—ANNIVERSARY OF BENJAMIN BANNEKER'S DEATH

An American astronomer, mathematician, surveyor, and almanac author, Banneker (1731–1806) was known as the "first Black man of science." He participated in the original survey for the nation's capital in Washington, D.C.

OCTOBER 16—WORLD FOOD DAY

Proclaimed in 1979 by the U.N., this day is celebrated worldwide annually to increase awareness, understanding, and year-round action to alleviate hunger. In the United States the endeavor is sponsored by 450 national organizations. For more, go to www.worldfoodday.org or call 202-653-2404.

OCTOBER 19—NATIONAL MULTICULTURAL DIVERSITY DAY

Adopted as a national event by the 1993 NEA Representative Assembly, educators can use this day to help students creatively celebrate all forms of diversity in their classrooms and communities. For more, see page 58.

Center has posted free interactive materials online for Spanish teachers to use with children ages 7 to 9, providing a type of game center for children with a variety of activities that reinforce the Spanish they learn in class. The "My world in words" section provides vocabulary lessons that focus on the playground and the park, along with reading and listening comprehension sections. Go to http://cvc.cervantes.es/aula/mimundo.

A TRIBUTE TO PABLO NERUDA

DFW International presents an online educational guide for teachers that contains exercises and projects suitable for teaching Chilean poet Pablo Neruda's poetry in elementary, secondary, and college level classes. The organization also links to a PowerPoint presentation about Neruda's life, works, and vision, complete with pictures, text, and music. The guide and presentation are available at www.dfwinternational.org/neruda.

EYE ON EARTH

Search, view, and download the superset of NASA's images, animations, and data visualizations of Earth at its Visible Earth site. The images are organized into topics that include agriculture, human dimensions, land surfaces, and oceans. You can also search for images by individual country or by various satellites. Go to http://visibleearth.nasa.gov/.

NPR'S JUSTICE LEARNING

A new Web site from NPR's *Justice Talking* program and The New York Times Learning Network provides free materials that engage middle school and high school students in informed political discourse and gives them the skills they need to understand today's complex issues by providing innovative curricular materials and creative lesson plans. The materials, which cover topics from gun control to voting rights, are coupled with audio from the *Justice Talking* radio show and articles from *The New York Times*. Go to www.justicelearning.org.

Is there a new teacher in the family?

Teaching is hereditary—it tends to run in families. If you have a son or daughter—or even a niece or nephew—who's started a new teaching career this fall, consider a gift befitting the occasion. **The NEA Professional Library** has the gifts you need to help get all the new teachers in your life off to a great start!

Check out these best-selling handbooks for teaching rookies.

Pitfalls and Potholes: A Checklist for Avoiding Common Mistakes of Beginning Teachers offers the sensible strategies novices never read in any textbook.

Bright Ideas: A Pocket Mentor for Beginning Teachers provides the sort of usable advice that every teacher needs and few teachers get.

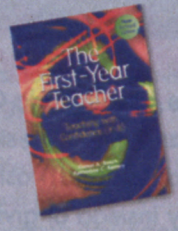
Item #2151-7-00-PL (Pitfalls) and Item #2164-9-00-PL (Bright Ideas)
Get these checklist books for a special NEA members-only price of $4.50 each.
Nonmembers pay $5.95.

For a complete list of books and other gift items, go to the NEA Professional Library Web site.

NEA Professional Library —*The* Bookstore for Educators!

Order online at www.nea.org/books or call 800-229-4200.

The First-Year Teacher: Teaching with Confidence (K–8) offers proven strategies for surviving those critical first weeks of school, all written by experienced teachers.



Item #2014-6-00-D
NEA Members: $16.95
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Item #4914-4-00-D (gray) or #4915-2-00-D (black)
Sizes M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL
Price: $30.00

New educators

are eager to let the world know that they're proud of what they do! Help them out with these colorful sweatshirts—a gift that says America's educators love their jobs, and it shows!

Teaching America's children isn't getting any easier.

In 2002, the so-called No Child Left Behind Act was signed into law, mandating high-stakes testing, forcing teachers to teach to a test, and wasting money on paperwork and bureaucracy instead of giving children what they really need: quality public school employees, smaller classes, safe schools, and up-to-date materials and facilities in preparation for higher education and success.

Providing services to our public schools is even harder.

Classrooms are overcrowded and in need of repair—and schools and colleges are facing cuts in state budgets across the country, impacting the daily lives of dedicated school employees.

Fed up? It's time to take a stand.

NEA is joining with partner organizations ACORN, Campaign for America's Future, MoveOn.org, and others, to sponsor thousands of house parties across the country on one day—September 22, 2004. Together, community by community, we will turn this administration around.

It starts here. It starts now.

Sign up today at www.greatpublicschools.org

For more information, call 202-822-7235 or email standupforschools@nea.org.

Sponsored by ACORN, Campaign for America's Future, MoveOn.org, and the National Education Association

The National Mobilization for Great Public Schools

nea NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION nea.org

Great Public Schools for Every Child

On TV

FORECAST EARTH

The Weather Channel, September 2, 4 a.m., ET.

This series focuses on the causes and effects of the powerful climatic and environmental forces changing our planet. The 30-minute episode, "Water's Fury," looks at the dangers of flooding and the technology that forecasters use to provide timely flash-flood warnings. Can be taped and used in the classroom forever.

BIOGRAPHY: CHARLES DICKENS

A&E, September 6, 7 a.m., ET. Check local listings.

"Charles Dickens: A Tale of Ambition and Genius" profiles the life of one of the world's first literary stars, from his troubled childhood to the spectacular successes of his novels *Oliver Twist* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. Can be taped and used in the classroom for two years. Teaching materials available at www.aetv.com/classroom.

MISS SPIDER'S SUNNY PATCH FRIENDS

Nickelodeon, Mondays–Fridays at 10 a.m., ET, beginning September 7. Check local listings.

A loving mom to a mixed brood of insects, Miss Spider helps four spiders and four adoptees from other species solve the problems they encounter while growing up, including relationships with parents, siblings, and friends. Can be taped and used in the classroom for one year.

CHERNOBYL HEART

HBO, September 9, 8:45 p.m., ET. Check local listings.

The "heart" in the title seems to refer to Adi Roche, the founder of Ireland's Chernobyl Children's Project, who leads the camera into places only high school students will want to see.

Roche has made it her mission to help a generation of deformed children born after the 1986 nuclear accident. This year's Oscar winner for documentary short subject, "Chernobyl Heart" takes the audience close to the disaster site, where radiation readings are still high. Director Maryann DeLeo shows us the plight of schoolchildren hundreds of miles away, who test positive for radiation just from eating homemade jam and shows us wards of disfigured children abandoned to Russian orphanages. The despair of these scenes is relieved during the last part of the film, which deals with a successful repair of a "Chernobyl heart" condition. This condition refers to defects found in children, which can be life threatening without surgery.

BIOMES: COASTLINES AND SEAS

Discovery Channel, September 13, 9 a.m., ET.

This hourlong documentary explores the natural evolution of the shorelines of Asia, scours the ocean depths to examine how squid and octopuses adapt, and looks at how jellyfish have thrived in the oceans for millions of years. Can be taped and used in the classroom for one year.

SAVE OUR HISTORY: S.O.S.—SAVE OUR SHIPS

The History Channel, September 24, 6 a.m., ET.

This hourlong program showcases five vintage ships in need of restoration and follows efforts to preserve America's maritime heritage. Can be taped and used in the classroom for two years with teaching materials at www.historychannel.com/classroom.

NOVA: ORIGINS

PBS, September 28–29, 8–10 p.m. ET/PT. Check local listings.

This four-part series, condensed into two evenings, will give high school students a chance to understand the latest research into how our world began. Using high-tech graphics, this series takes a tour through time, from the Big Bang to humans' imprint on Earth. Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson invites us to imagine the Earth's billion plus years of formation as a mere 24 hours on an analog clock, which helps viewers understand time as an astrophysicist sees it—in discrete packages with definitive events. The first hour deals with Earth's first few hundred million years, when our planet was a hostile place that could not support life. The second hour discusses how the chemistry of the young Earth supported life, and suggests that this happened much earlier than previously thought. In the third hour, scientists explain how they search for life beyond the Earth and predict what an alien life form might look like. The final hour deals with research on the Big Bang, showing how scientists are trying to measure the "cosmic echo" recorded 40 years ago. "Origins," a major effort for NOVA, presents complex research as accessible and intriguing. A comprehensive resource can be found at www.pbs.org/nova/origins.

ROAD TO THE WHITE HOUSE

C-SPAN, Sundays at 6:30 p.m., ET, and Mondays at 12:30 a.m., ET.

A 90-minute look at news, events, issues, speeches, and appearances related to the 2004 presidential race. Can be taped and used in the classroom forever with teaching materials available at www.c-span.org/classroom.

On TV listings are provided by KIDSNET, a national resource for children's media in Washington, D.C., www.kidsnet.org, and by Cable in the Classroom's Access Learning magazine at www.ciconline.org.

PHOTOS: MISS SPIDER: 2003 NELVANA LIMITED/CALLAWAY AND KIRK COMPANY; CHERNOBYL: MARYANNE DELEO; SAVE OUR HISTORY: INTERNATIONAL YACHT RESTORATION SCHOOL; NOVA: WGBH BOSTON

In Print

UNCONVENTIONAL BOOKS FOR TODAY'S ISSUES

Can—or should—less conventional, controversial books be taught in the classroom? *Great Books for High School Kids: A Teacher's Guide to Books that Can Change Teens' Lives*, compiled by high school English teachers Rick Ayers and Amy Crawford, considers this question with essays by teachers about the ways their students reacted to, learned from, and came to love the books they encountered in school. The book also includes lists of some classic and not-so-classic books that teach important lessons. 240 pp. $16 from Beacon Press. To order, visit www.uua.org/bookstore/ or call 800-215-9076.

CELEBRATE NATIONAL MULTICULTURAL DIVERSITY DAY

For more than a decade, educators around the country have been celebrating National Multicultural Diversity Day (NMDD) in their schools and communities on the **third Monday in October.** Originally created by Cleorah Scruggs, a fourth-grade teacher in Flint, Michigan, the day was adopted as a national event by the 1993 NEA Representative Assembly to "increase awareness of the tremendous need to celebrate our diversity collectively."

This year, you can get involved, too. Just be creative. Start by sharing cultural information with your class about yourself, then introduce students to multicultural issues and possible solutions by inviting a local expert to talk on diversity. You can also have students sing songs that celebrate diversity and ask them to bring in items or food representative of their ethnic heritage to share with classmates.

In Flint, Scruggs and her colleagues celebrate the day with a host of activities, beginning with a breakfast for faith and community leaders who discuss diversity issues and ways of promoting harmony and equity. The day concludes by showcasing student presentations on diversity along with panel discussions, stories, songs, dance, food vendors, charitable gift giving, and other events celebrating the area's many cultures.

Scruggs also started the Pen CyberPals Hookup Connection, a program in which students choose other students who differ from themselves in some way to be their pen pals for at least a year.

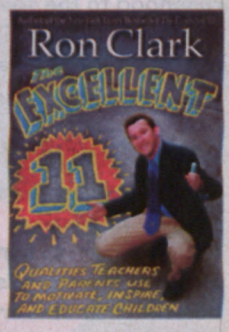
To help educators share ways to celebrate diversity both on National Multicultural Diversity Day (October 19) and throughout the year, NEA will sponsor an electronic bulletin board on www.nea.org this fall. Stay tuned for details.

"We've all had a part in making America great," says Scruggs, "and it's important to acknowledge it and develop respect among cultures, which can lead to greater peace and less violence in our schools and communities."

GETTING IN THE GARDEN BUSINESS

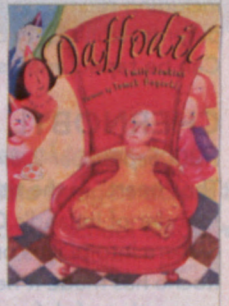
Growing Ventures: Starting a School Garden Business, walks teachers through the process of starting and running a "green" gardening business with their students. The book includes guidelines, activities, diagrams, and resources to engage young people ages 6 to 22 in planning a community-based enterprise. 64 pp. $19.95 from The National Gardening Association. To order, visit http://store. yahoo.com/nationalgardening/11-3110.html or call 800-538-7476, ext. 143.

PERSONALITY PERKS



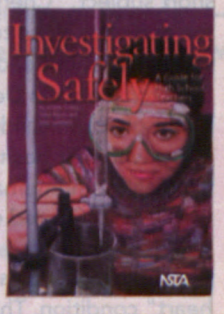
The Excellent 11 by Ron Clark names and explains the importance of 11 different personality traits that Clark feels make a good teacher and a good parent. The traits are intertwined and illustrated with Clark's personal stories and reflections about his experiences as both a student and a teacher. The book expands on Clark's previous work, *The Essential 55*, but focuses on fewer topics more in-depth. 160 pp. $19.95 from Hyperion Books. To order, call 800-759-0190.

A DIFFERENT COLORED DRESS



Daffodil and her sisters all look alike and have to don their designated colors each time they dress up, until one day the girls get upset and throw fits. With humor and charm, author Emily Jenkins tells the tale of triplets looking for their own identities based on something more than appearance in the colorfully illustrated Daffodil. 32 pp. $16 from Frances Foster Books. To order, call 888-330-8477.

KEEPING SCIENCE SAFE



Written by teaching veterans, *Investigating Safely: A Guide for High School Teachers* quickly brings rookie and veteran science educators up to speed on what they need to make their labs and classrooms safe. Peppered with useful sidebars and examples, the easy-to-read book is organized with the complex needs of today's high school labs in mind and addresses topics from storing and disposing of hazardous chemicals, to accommodating students with special needs, to the unique

HANDS ART: PHOTODISC

safety requirements of specific disciplines. 214 pp. $22.95 from the National Science Teachers Association. To order, go to www.nsta.org or call 800-277-5300.

EXTRA CREDIT EMERGENCIES

To earn extra credit, 12 students in Mr. Magro's class have written stories about their emergency situations during the year. Now it's time to gather and read them aloud. Each chapter of *The SOS File* by Betsy Byars, Betsy Duffey, and Laurie Myers tells another of these tales in this book suitable for ages 8–12. Find out why someone doesn't deserve extra credit. 80 pp. $15.95 from Henry Holt and Company. To order, call 888-330-8477.

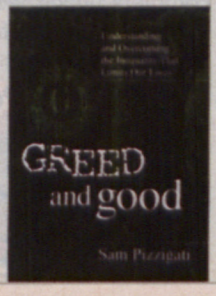
STORIES ABOUT CHANGE

To honor the 50th anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, Juan Williams tells the stories of more than 30 people who experienced the fight for equality first-hand. The tales in *My Soul Looks Back In Wonder: Voices of the Civil Rights Experience*, create a fresh, intimate view of history in the making and reveal just how much the battle for civil rights affected the lives of every American. 216 pp. $19.95 from Sterling Publishing. To order, call 800-805-5489.

MATH IS FOR THE BEARS

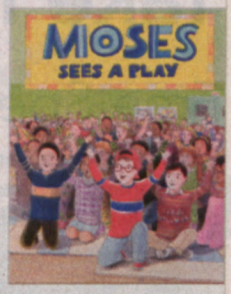
If your elementary school students aren't getting into fractions, tempt them with *Polar Bear Math*, by Ann Whitehead Nagda and Cindy Bickel. The right side of the book chronicles the true tale of polar bear cubs Klondike and Snow, who are raised by zoo staff after their mother abandons them. The left side includes lessons on fractions that reflect the math used to raise the cubs: How much should the cubs eat? What fraction of the day do the cubs stay at the zoo? 30 pp. $16.95 from Henry Holt and Company. To order, call 800-672-2054.

WEALTH AND GREED IN AMERICA



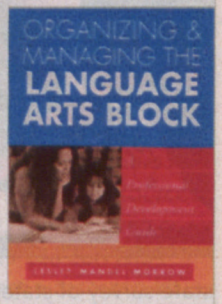
Between 1983 and 1998, more than half of the increase in America's wealth went into the pockets of the top 1 percent of Americans. That's one way to measure the sweeping change that is transforming the nation, the subject of *Greed and Good* by Sam Pizzigati, former NEA publications director and a veteran writer on the economy. Pizzigati explores how the growing chasm between the richest and the rest of us is damaging American society and democracy. $34.95 from The Apex Press. To order, go to www.greedandgood.org.

COMMUNICATING WITHOUT SOUNDS



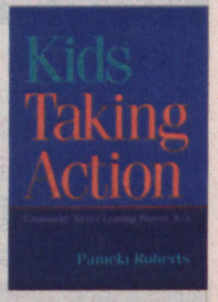
Moses, a deaf child who goes to a special school with other deaf children, makes a new friend when his class is joined by hearing students from another school for a production by the Theatre of the Deaf. In *Moses Sees a Play*, by Isaac Millman, different signs and deaf terms are used to teach children about diversity in others and how to connect with them. For elementary school ages. 32 pp. $16 from Frances Foster Books. To order, call 888-330-8477.

RESTRUCTURING LANGUAGE ARTS

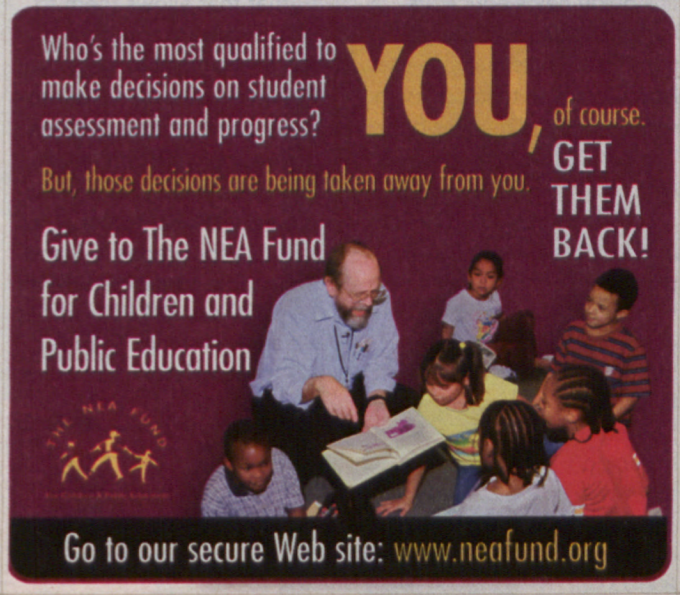


In *Organizing and Managing the Language Arts Block: A Professional Development Guide*, reading specialist and educator Lesley Mandel Morrow gives teachers new and creative ideas on how to revive their language arts lesson plans and teaching methods in the elementary school classroom. Morrow uses case studies of different grade levels to illustrate teaching methods, following them up with planning ideas and activities for language arts instruction. 348 pp. $30 from The Guilford Press. To order, visit www.guilford.com.

LEARNING FROM THE COMMUNITY



From picking up dog poop to voter registration and awareness, there are many things kids can do in the community to enhance their education experience. In *Kids Taking Action: Community Service Learning Projects, K–8*, Pamela Roberts describes community service learning and offers 18 project ideas, some more detailed than others. A helpful resource list is included. 126 pp. $14 from the Northeast Foundation for Children. To order, visit www.responsiveclassroom.org/bookstore/.


Who's the most qualified to make decisions on student assessment and progress?
YOU,
of course.
But, those decisions are being taken away from you.
GET THEM BACK!
Give to The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education
THE NEA FUND
Go to our secure Web site: www.neafund.org

Take Note

Free Special Ed Resources

Two new resources are now available from NEA's Student Achievement Department to help educators who work with children with disabilities:

• **Advocating for Special Education Working Conditions**—This 46-page guide offers practical advocacy, organizing, and bargaining strategies to improve special education working conditions, such as class size, caseload, formula for inclusion, compensation for IEP-related duties, and professional development. The first national document of its kind, it includes a 50-state survey of state regulations and bargaining provisions, a synthesis of current special education personnel recruitment and retention research, and sample contract language for specific special education issues.

• **Accessible Classroom Primer CD-ROM**—A compendium of presentations, articles, and links to help educators find resources on assistive, instructional, and accessible technologies and universal design for learning strategies. The CD-ROM was created as a joint project in partnership with Johns Hopkins University Center for Technology in Education and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Technology in Education Consortium (MAR*TEC) with a generous donation from Plato Learning.

Both resources are available while supplies last. To order, e-mail pralabate@nea.org with complete contact information.

Celebrating the Role Of Teachers

Promote education unity and celebrate your colleagues by participating in **World Teachers' Day** on **October 5, 2004,** created by Education International (EI), the largest confederation of teacher trade unions of which NEA is a member. World Teachers' Day provides the opportunity to draw public attention to the role of teachers worldwide as well as to the vital role they play in society. The theme chosen for 2004 and following years is "Quality Teachers for Quality Education," with a specific 2004 subtheme of "Wanted: Quality Teachers to be Recruited and Retained." For more information, including downloads in multiple languages of pamphlets, posters, cards, and ideas for World Teachers' Day activities, go to www.ei-ie.org/wtd/.

BOOKS BY NEA MEMBERS

TEACHING SELF-CONTROL: A CURRICULUM FOR RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR

By Martin Henley

Written by a professor of education who has taught sixth grade and special education, this guide helps educators minimize classroom disruptions through its ready-to-use lesson plans to teach children self-control and responsibility. The activities can be integrated into existing content areas and used to involve students in learning self-control skills that include coping with mistakes and failures and getting along with others. 200 pp. $27.95 from the National Education Service. To order, go to www.nesonline.com or call 800-733-6786.

A,E,I,O...YOU WIN!

By Mary Schaer

This handy notebook by a 24-year teaching veteran gives students a lesson in phonics, spelling, and vocabulary all at once through a hands-on game format that allows them to play and learn together in a fun and enjoyable way. Providing 60 easy-to-photocopy game boards at three increasingly difficult levels, this book makes for a versatile educational tool that is suitable for grades 1–3 and adjustable to each student's level. 70 pp. $24.95 from 1st Place Publishing. To order, go to www.1stplacephonics.com or call 503-313-5395.

PASSAGE: A DOG'S JOURNEY WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

By Robert Young

Focusing on the classic expedition of Lewis and Clark, this book recounts their journey in a way sure to catch the attention of young students—through the eyes of Seaman, a 150-pound dog that traveled every step of the way with the explorers. Written by a reading specialist, this activity book encourages children to engage in the text as they answer questions about the story and complete unfinished illustrations. 38 pp. $6.95 from Mad Dog Press. To order, send a check to Mad Dog Press, 2901 Norkenzie Road, Eugene, OR 97408.

WHAT HAPPENED TO MARION'S BOOK?

By Brook Berg

This illustrated children's book creatively teaches youngsters the lesson of taking care of their library books. As they read of Marion the Hedgehog's attempts to fix her jelly-stained library book, children learn the importance of responsibility, honesty, and forgiveness. Written in a simple narrative by a district media specialist, this book works well for reading aloud to students as a group or one-on-one. 48 pp. $16.95 from Upstart Books. To order, go to www.amazon.com.

FOR MORE, VISIT "BOOKS BY NEA MEMBERS ONLINE" AT WWW.NEA.ORG/NEATODAY.

PHOTO TOP: PHOTODISC

Proud To Be ESP

New versions of the NEA brochure series, *We're NEA ESPs and Proud of It!*, which describes ESP jobs and the people who perform them, are now available on the ESP Web site at www.nea.org/esphome/jobs/. Eleven brochures—one general one, plus one for each of the nine K–12 ESP job groups and one for Higher Ed ESP—cover support professional job groups and subgroups to help people understand the individual ESP roles. You can view a regular Web page (html) version of each brochure, or download a Microsoft Word or PDF version. Laid out as standard-sized 8 1/2 by 11-in. trifold pamphlets, the brochures are easy to print from your desktop.

Adopt a Pilot

Educators living in cities served by Southwest Airlines can help students learn about new places—without leaving the classroom. Southwest Airlines' free education program, Adopt-A-Pilot, provides more than 450 pilots who volunteer for "adoption" by classrooms. Developed for fifth-grade classes, the program unites students with pilots to explore math, science, and more. For four weeks, students track their adopted pilot's journey and complete a curriculum developed in cooperation with the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, the National Association of Teachers of Math and Science, and other education specialists. Students apply these subjects to aviation activities, made meaningful by their interaction with a real pilot. Southwest Airlines offers the program in Spanish as well, providing translated curriculum and bilingual pilots. To learn more or to register, visit www.southwest.com/adoptapilot. Registration for the 2005 program opens this month.

Banned Books Week

Thousands of libraries and bookstores will speak out against attempts to censor books and celebrate the freedom to read during Banned Books Week, **September 25 to October 2, 2004.** For 23 years, Banned Books Week has been drawing attention to the danger that exists when restraints are imposed on the availability of information in a free society and reminding Americans not to take this precious democratic freedom for granted.

Visit the American Library Association's Web site at www.ala.org/bbw for more information on Banned Books Week, including a list of suggested activities to do in and out of the classroom to help support the effort.

Teen Troubles

Depression is more than the everyday ups and downs of being a teenager. It's a serious health problem that can affect behavior, physical health, academic performance and social activity. Provide your students with information that can help them recognize and treat depression by ordering a free "Teen Troubles" package from the National Institute of Mental Health and the Federal Citizen Information Center. To order, call 888-878-3256; send your name and address to Teen Troubles, Pueblo, Colorado 81009; or visit www.pueblo.gsa.gov. Look under "Health" and then "Mental Health."

NEA's Read Across America Is Where it's 'Hat!'

NEA knows reading is "where it's hat" when it comes to helping America's children celebrate the diversity of their world. That's why NEA's Read Across America is combining the familiar red and white stovepipe hat of the Cat in the Hat with a variety of reading hats and resources in an exciting Read Across America resource packet offering RAA posters with reproducible back panels for your school and classroom. NEA RAA partners such as WGBH, Major League Soccer, and Youth Leaders for Literacy have contributed to this treasure trove of resources, including an NEA Members-only CD-ROM. There's even a Spanish-language poster introducing NEA's Lea con NEA theme. For more information and to request a resource kit, go to www.nea.org/readacross.

Have you ever...

...had to defend public education? Or explain why it's important for every educator to join the Association? If so, you're not alone. But don't worry. Now you can have the answers to the most commonly asked "tough" questions right at your fingertips.

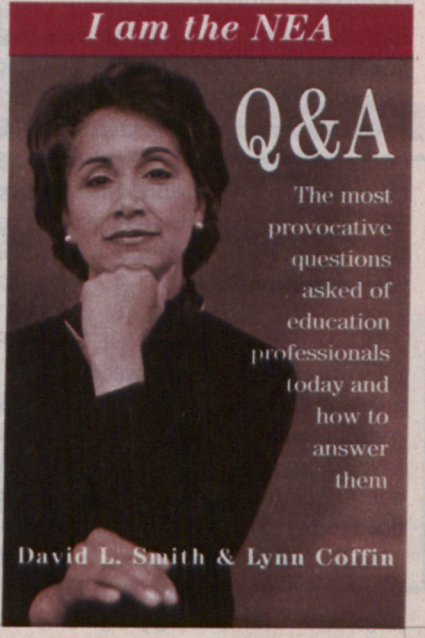
96 pp.
Item #2031-6-00-D
Nonmembers: $12.95
Members: $ 9.95

To order, contact the **NEA Professional Library** online at www.nea.org/books, or call toll-free at **800-229-4200**.

NEA Professional Library—THE Bookstore for Educators

Shipping charges will be added to each order.

nea NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
Great Public Schools for Every Child


I am the NEA
Q&A
The most provocative questions asked of education professionals today and how to answer them
David L. Smith & Lynn Coffin

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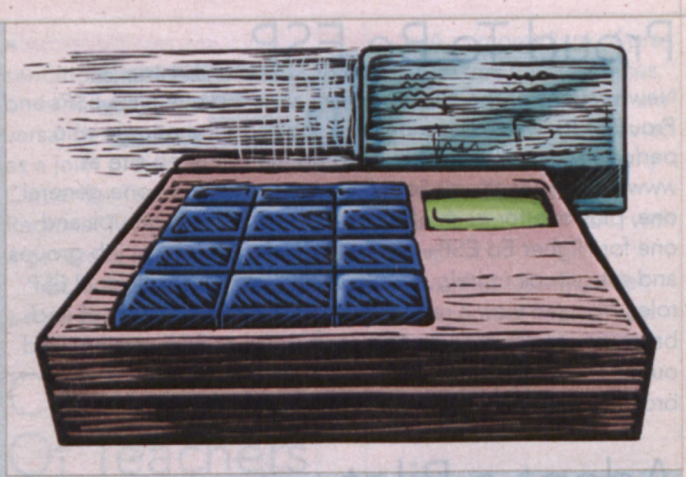
Heads Up From NEA Member Benefits



GET THE BEST CREDIT CARD AROUND—the **NEA WorldPoints℠ Platinum Plus® Credit Card**—with no annual fee, low Annual Percentage Rates, and a choice between travel, cash, and merchandise rewards! For more information about the costs and benefits associated with the use of the card or to apply, visit www.neamb.com/worldpoints or call 1-888-758-7946 (mention priority code HV75.) TTY users call 1-800-833-6262.

NEA-Sponsored CDs and Money Market Accounts offer yields that have consistently been among the highest nationwide and FDIC insurance up to $100,000 per depositor. Minimum opening balances are $1,000 for certificates of deposit and $500 for money market accounts. To open an account, visit www.neamb.com/deposits or call 1-800-457-2258 (mention priority code JA0GK.) These accounts are offered and administered by MBNA America Bank, N.A. Member FDIC.

GET YOUR JUST DUE—NEA DUES-TAB Insurance, that is! Eligible NEA members qualify for no-cost life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance through the NEA DUES-TAB®, Insurance Program, sponsored by the NEA Members Insurance Trust. Take a moment to register your beneficiary for this free benefit online at www.neamb.com/duestab.

Also review your options for term life insurance. Many of the plans have been improved to allow maximum flexibility for coverage amounts, age ranges, and health conditions. Spouses can now apply for coverage up to 100 percent of the member's benefit amount, and some plans—like the NEA Term Life Plan and the NEA Guaranteed Issue Life Plan—don't even require a medical exam!

For more information, visit the Web address above or call toll-free, 1-800-637-4636, Monday–Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (or Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) ET.

THE NEA MEMBERS INSURANCE TRUST HAS $45 BILLION OF LIFE INSURANCE IN FORCE PROTECTING NEA MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

What's Up at HIN

NEA RA DELEGATES SHOW AN INTEREST IN HEALTHY LIVING!

HIN's Hall of Health and booth were bustling with lots of free giveaways that encouraged healthy living at this year's Representative Assembly! Highlights included the distribution of 10,000 McDonald's Stepometers and 6,000 bottled waters, accompanied by Washington, D.C., walking maps created especially for RA delegates. Atkins Nutritionals also exhibited by giving away nutritional supplements and breakfast bars. To learn more about HIN's physical activity/nutrition initiative and other programs, visit www.neahin.org.

COLLABORATING FOR BETTER CRISIS OUTCOMES

Effective collaboration between schools and first-responders (e.g., police, firefighters, emergency medical services personnel) greatly contributes to crisis preparedness. HIN interviewed personnel from 52 fire and emergency medical services agencies and 40 police departments serving rural, suburban, and urban communities across the country. HIN compiled their responses to create "Top Ten Recommendations to Schools from First Responders." To view or download a copy, visit the school and community safety page at www.neahin.org/programs/schoolsafety/.

ARTHUR AUDIO BOOKS AVAILABLE NOW!

HIN is one of three charities that will benefit from the sales of a recently released Arthur CD. Celebrity readers, including Clay Aiken, Kevin Bacon, and Daisy Fuentes, deliver lively and amusing performances as they read Arthur stories. The CD also includes games, activities and educational materials. In addition, a Web site was created to include lesson plans related to the stories. Go to www.storiesforheroes.com to access the lesson plans and to find out how you can purchase these great audio books!

CAN WE TALK IN SPANISH?

Research shows that when parents have open conversations with their children about sexuality, young people are more likely to make healthy decisions. In response, HIN is working with NEA affiliates to implement ¿Conversamos?, a parent-child communication program. Workshops are offered to Spanish-speaking parents of later elementary and middle school students and include a curriculum that helps participants initiate family conversations on tough topics. HIN also provides technical assistance to communities that are interested in implementing the program. To learn more, go online to www.canwetalk.org or contact David Hoover at 202-822-7723.

ART TOP: PHOTODISC

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Preferred member rates are yours when you reserve an economy through full size vehicle in advance with Hertz or Alamo. When making reservations, use CDP# 50655 for Hertz, and ID# 613575, Rate Code BY for Alamo. For more information, call 1-800-637-4636, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (or Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) ET.

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CERTIFICATION

Members who are seeking **National Board Certification** can apply for a low-cost loan designed to help cover the $2,300 assessment fee. The NEA National Board Certification Loan® is a special line of credit that has no application fee, no annual fee, no prepayment penalty, and no collateral is required. Call 1-800-545-4094 for more information or to apply.

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The **NEA Income Protection® Plan** provides income when you are unable to work due to illness or injury. For more information, call 1-888-461-1612, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., CT.

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The **NEA MemberCare® Long-Term Care Insurance Program** helps pay for nursing home, assisted living and home health care expenses. For more information, call 1-800-884-2675, Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., ET.

NEA Homeowners® Insurance provides inflation-proof protection for your valuables – at school or at home. For more information, call 1-800-637-4636, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (or Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) ET.

MONEY MARKET

Earn some of the highest yields in the nation with the **NEA-Sponsored Money Market Account℠** from MBNA America Bank. First time account holders are eligible to receive a 60-day introductory bonus rate. You'll also enjoy the safety of FDIC insurance up to $100,000 per depositor. For more information, call 1-800-637-4636, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (or Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) ET.

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VACATIONS

NEA Member Benefits is pleased to introduce **Collette Vacations**, a leading provider of escorted and independent tours, family cruises, and weekend getaway packages. The knowledgeable Collette staff will help you plan your trip, offer timely travel tips, and even help you decide whether an escorted tour or independent vacation is right for you. NEA members receive a 5% discount on the land cost of most trips when booking through Collette Vacations Web Site and toll-free phone number; be sure to mention your NEA membership. Call 1-800-528-1923 or visit the Vacation Web Site at www.neamb.com/discount/collette.jsp to lean more about traveling the world with Collette!

VACATION RENTALS

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WEB SITE

NEA Member Benefits Web Site Announces Teacher's Gift Pack Giveaway!

- Register in the "Members-Only" area at www.neamb.com between 9/1/04–9/30/04.
- Click on "Online Teacher Gift Pack Giveaway" to win one of 25 gift packs.

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Ready, Set, Go!

A teacher-to-be looks toward September

BY RHONDA LEWIS

I CAN FINALLY SEE the light at the end of the tunnel, but as I get closer to that light, I am tempted to take a few steps back, unsure that I am ready for what lies ahead. My teaching career is finally at my fingertips. I have passed all the tests and endured all the classes. Yet, in the pit of my stomach, I feel nervous about what being a teacher will require of me.

I think about the teachers who have helped to shape my life: They all seemed so wise and always seemed to have the right answers. Now, I will have 30 pairs of eyes gazing into mine each day, looking for answers to all of their questions. What if I don't have all of the answers?

I have been reassured by many friends who are already teaching. "You'll be fine," they say. I know I will be, but doubt is still at the back of my mind.

This will not be my first job. After graduating from Pomona College in 1999, I returned to the Bay Area and became a "dot.comer" working for a couple of small Internet consulting companies. But I had always wanted to be a teacher. I was the one who would come home from school, line up my dolls, and teach them everything I had learned that day.

I have an aunt who lived close to us when I was growing up in Trinidad and she was a teacher. I loved when she would take me to her school when my school was off on break. I was eight or nine. Her students were much older, but she would give me their old notebooks and I would pretend to grade them.

In 2002, I decided to pursue my lifelong dream and entered the teacher preparation program at the National Hispanic University. Two years later, I feel well trained and supported to become the best teacher I can be.

Those two years seemed like such a long time, but now when I look back, they just seemed to fly by. I can remember each class as though I just took it last semester.

Sometimes my theory classes were intimidating. I remember being confused by all the talk about teaching to standards and differentiating instruction. How would I be able to tell which students were ahead, which were behind, and which were right on target, and then support each one? It was hard to fathom.

But when I started my student teaching, I found it was so much easier to do in person—I didn't have to divide myself into 100 different pieces.

Student teaching was the best part of the program for me (except that it's unpaid). I had great mentor teachers, welcoming students, and a great school environment. I not only learned how to plan lessons, meet state standards, and manage my class, but student teaching also allowed me courageously to face 25 students who were looking to me for answers.

I did not have all of the answers, but it didn't matter because part of teaching is learning. I continue to learn something new every day.

I am very excited to start my teaching career. My pencils are sharpened, my bulletin boards are ready, and my classroom is organized. Even with the butterflies in my stomach, I am ready for those 30 smiling fourth-grade faces. nea

Former NEA Student Program member **Rhonda Lewis** teaches fourth grade at North Tamarind Elementary School in Fontana, California. She wrote this essay several months before beginning her new career.

PHOTO: STEVE LEWIS

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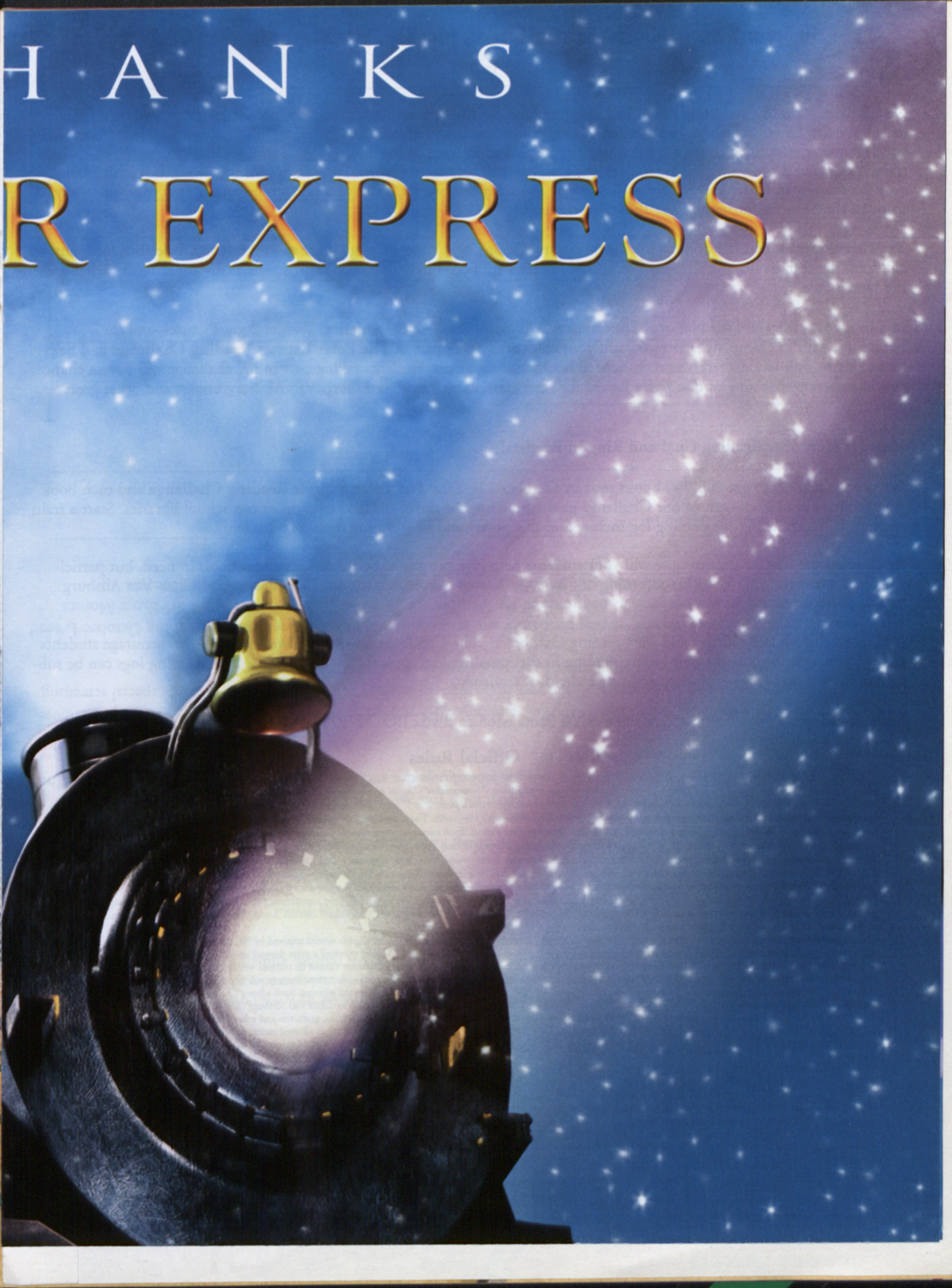
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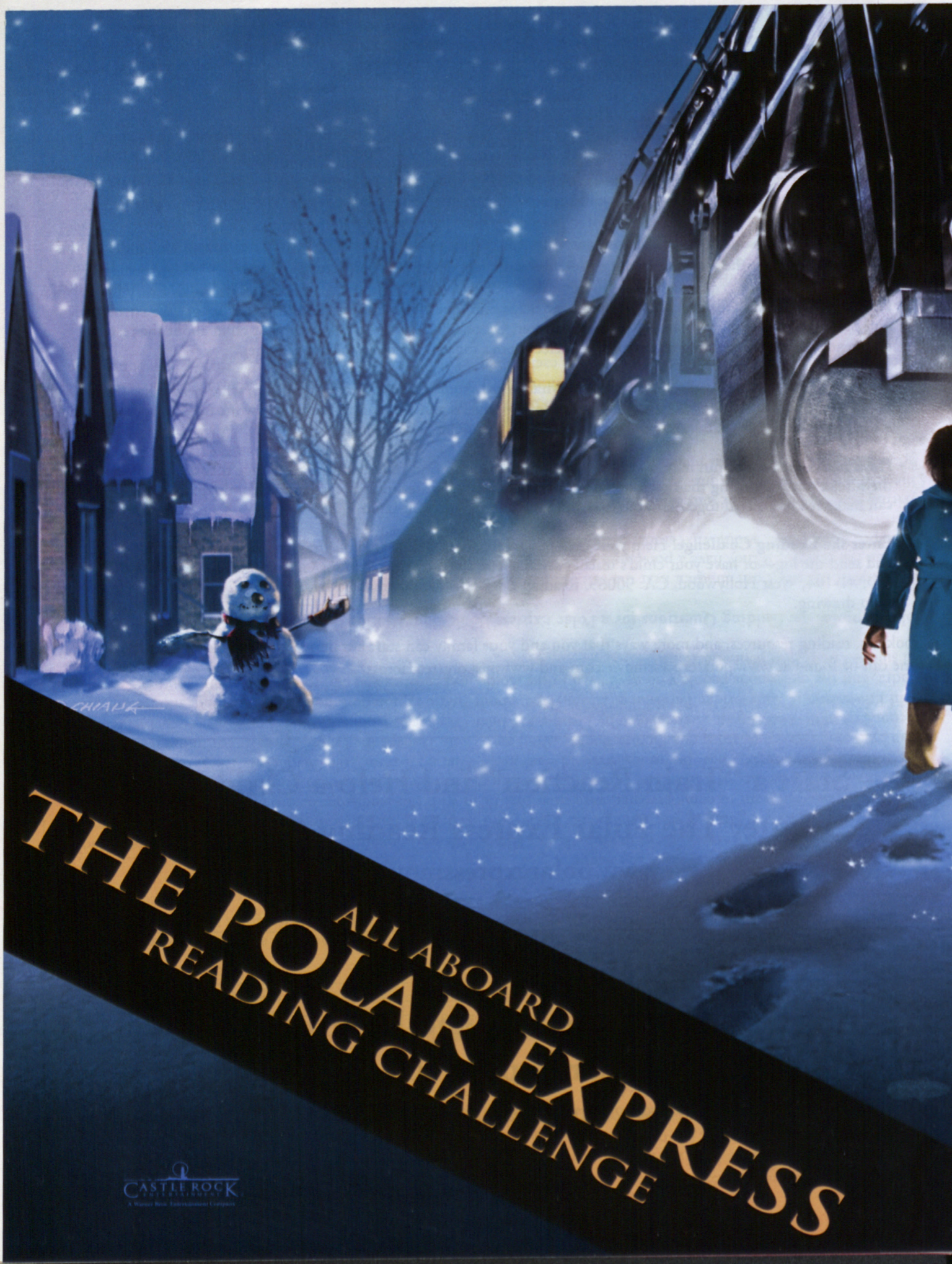
IN THEATERS
THIS NOVEMBER

PHOTO: DANNY PECK/PECK STUDIOS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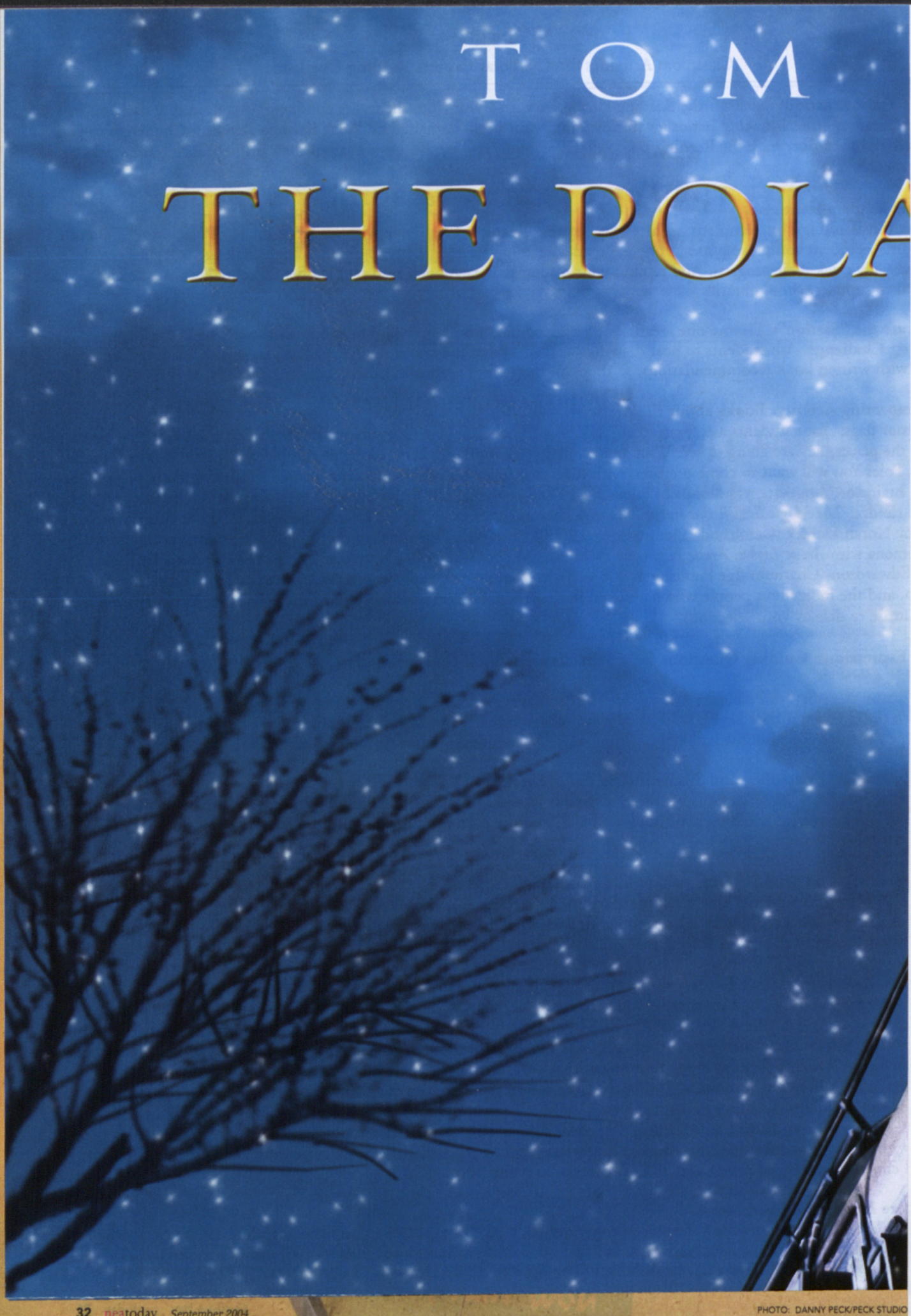

PHOTO: DANNY PECK/PECK STUDIO

All Aboard! Take a Magical Reading Journey with The Polar Express Reading Challenge

Dear Teachers:

On Christmas Eve, a young boy lies in bed listening hard for the bells of Santa's sleigh, which he has been told by a friend does not exist. Later that night, he's startled awake, not by the sound of bells but by a very different sound. He looks out his window and is astounded to see a giant steam engine parked in front of his house! The conductor invites him to board the train, *The Polar Express*, which is filled with children on their way to the North Pole. So begins this wondrous journey, not only for the boy in Chris Van Allsburg's classic *The Polar Express*, but for readers and now moviegoers who wind their way through the beautiful images of *The Polar Express* movie.

The Polar Express opens the door to the dream-like magic of Chris Van Allsburg's journey to the North Pole. But for many children, the real dream of a well-stocked school library with books like *The Polar Express* feels as distant and unreachable as the North Pole.

In a unique partnership, the National Education Association's Read Across America, Warner Bros. Pictures, and the Houghton Mifflin Company invite you and your students to take part in **The Polar Express Reading Challenge** and help kids in struggling schools receive much-needed books and resources. Students taking part in the challenge will have a chance to win a private screening of *The Polar Express* for their class, as well as signed Chris Van Allsburg books, and other great prizes.

Help Us Meet Our Reading Goal and Ring in Readers!

We need your help to get 200,000 books read by October 22! Take **The Polar Express Reading Challenge** and each book your students read in pursuit of our Challenge goal represents one dollar pledged to support our school libraries. Start a train reaction by reproducing the reading log included in this poster and distributing it to your students.

By entering the Challenge, not only will your students help give the gift of books to kids and schools in need, but participants can win prizes like a private screening of *The Polar Express* for your classroom, as well as signed Chris Van Allsburg books, posters, and more!

Join us on this unique journey and start reading October 1! The Challenge lasts only 3 weeks, so please encourage students to read as many books as possible before sending in their reading logs, postmarked by October 22. (Reading logs can be submitted by you on behalf of your class, or by individual students.)

Send your log to: Polar Express Challenge, 8205 Santa Monica Blvd., P.O. #1-194, West Hollywood, CA 90069.

Official Rules

Polar Express Challenge

1. **How to Enter: NO PURCHASE NECESSARY.** Polar Express Challenge Sweepstakes ("Sweepstakes") begins on October 1, 2004, and ends on October 22, 2004 ("Sweepstakes Period"). To Enter: Obtain an official entry form found at NEA's monthly newsletter or use a plain 3" x 5" card or download a version at www.polarexpressmovie.com. Legibly hand-print your name, address, zip code, age, plus day and evening phone numbers with area codes. Then, mail your completed entry form in a first-class, stamped envelope to: 8205 Santa Monica Blvd., PO #1-194, West Hollywood, CA 90069. One entry per person. Each envelope is considered one entry. No mechanically reproduced entries permitted. All entries must be postmarked by October 22, 2004, and received by November 5, 2004. Warner Bros., Inc. ("Sponsor") or NCompass, Inc. will verify receipt of entries via mail. All entries submitted become the sole property of Sponsor and will not be returned. If the winner is a minor, all prizes will be delivered to parent or legal guardian.
2. **Eligibility:** To enter the Sweepstakes you must be a legal U.S. resident. Sweepstakes is void in Puerto Rico, U.S. territories, and possessions and where restricted or prohibited by law. The Sweepstakes, and any web site pages and advertisements relating thereto, is intended for viewing only within the United States. You are not authorized to participate in the Sweepstakes if you are not located within the United States. Employees of Warner Bros. and NCompass, Inc., their affiliated companies, parents, subsidiaries, advertising and promotion agencies, and their respective officers, directors, employees, representatives, and agents, (collectively, the "Sweepstakes Entities"), and their immediate families and members of their households, are ineligible to participate in this Sweepstakes.
3. **Drawing and Notification**: One random drawing will be held on or about November 10, 2004, from among all eligible entries received by NCompass, Inc. ("Sweepstakes Administrator"), an independent judging organization whose decisions are final and binding in all respects. Odds of winning a prize depend on the number of eligible entries received. Many will enter, few will win. Potential winners will be notified by phone or mail and if such potential winner cannot be reached within seven (7) calendar days from the first notification attempt, then such person shall be disqualified and an alternate winner will be selected. These notification requirements will be strictly enforced.
4. **Prizes:** Ten (10) Home Town Screening for 50 people each (ARV $500). Ten (10) Signed Movie Posters signed by award winning book author Chris Van Allsburg (ARV $5). Five (5) sets of fifteen books written by Chris Van Allsburg (ARV $180). Twenty five (25) copies of "Polar Express" written by Chris Van Allsburg (ARV $12). One hundred (100) "Polar Express Party-In-A-Box" sets to contain activity books, mug, crayons and snack drinks, (ARV $50 each). Meals, taxes, gratuities and other expenses not specifically identified in these Official Rules are sole responsibility of the Grand Prize winner. No transfer, substitution, or cash equivalent for prizes allowed except at Sponsor's sole discretion due to prize unavailability and then only for a prize of equal or greater value. Limit one prize per person per household. All prizes will awarded. Unclaimed prizes will be awarded to an alternate winner.
5. **Prize Conditions:** The parent/legal guardian of potential Grand Prize winner will be required to execute an Affidavit of Eligibility, a Liability Release and a Publicity Release ("Affidavit/Release") on behalf of the Grand Prize winner. The Affidavit/Release forms must be returned by the date indicated on the documents. If the potential Grand Prize winner fails to return such documents by such date, or if potential winner is found to be ineligible, or if he/she does not comply with the Official Rules, then potential winner will be disqualified and an alternate winner will be selected. The Grand Prize winner must have his/her parent or legal guardians accompany him/her and any minor guests at the event. If prizes or prize notifications are returned as undeliverable, this will result in disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. All federal, state or other tax liabilities (including income taxes) arising from this Sweepstakes will be the sole responsibility of each winner. Except where prohibited by law, the winner's entry and acceptance of the prize constitutes permission, (or if winner is a minor the parent / legal guardian of the winner will be required to execute an affidavit of permission) for the Sweepstakes Entities to use said winner's name, photograph, likeness, statements, biographical information, voice, and city and state address on a worldwide basis and in all forms of media, in perpetuity, without further compensation.
6. **Sweepstakes Conditions:** This Sweepstakes is subject to all applicable federal, state and local laws. By participating, entrants agree to be bound by these Official Rules and the decisions of the Sponsor and Sweepstakes Administrator and waive any right to claim ambiguity in the Sweepstakes or these Official Rules. Winners and entrants (and entrant's parent/legal guardian) also agree to release, discharge, indemnify and hold harmless Sweepstakes Entities from and against any claims, damages, demands, losses or liability due to any injuries, damages or losses to any person, including death, or property of any kind resulting in whole or in part, directly or indirectly from acceptance, possession, misuse or use of any prize or participation in any Sweepstakes-related activity or participation in this Sweepstakes.
7. **Limitations of Liability:** Sweepstakes Entities are not responsible for late, lost, damaged, misdirected, incorrectly addressed, incomplete, illegible, undeliverable, destroyed, or postage-due mail entries and/or lost, late, misdirected, undeliverable materials, or the acts or omissions of any other person's computer, related to or resulting from downloading any material for the Sweepstakes, or other telecommunications malfunctions which may limit an entrant's ability to participate. Sponsor may prohibit an entrant from participating in the Sweepstakes or winning a prize if, in its sole discretion, it determines that said entrant is attempting to undermine the legitimate operation of the Sweepstakes by cheating, hacking, deception, or other unfair playing practices (including the use of automated quick entry programs) or intending to annoy, abuse, threaten or harass any other entrants or Sponsor representatives. If for any reason this Sweepstakes is not capable of running as planned, including, but not limited to, infection by computer virus, bugs, tampering, unauthorized intervention, fraud, or any other causes beyond the reasonable control of Sponsor which corrupt or affect the administration, security, fairness, integrity or proper conduct of the promotion, then Sponsor reserves the right at its sole discretion to cancel, terminate, modify or suspend the Sweepstakes. CAUTION: ANY ATTEMPT BY AN ENTRANT TO DELIBERATELY DAMAGE THE WEBSITE OR UNDERMINE THE LEGITIMATE OPERATION OF THE SWEEPSTAKES MAY BE IN VIOLATION OF CRIMINAL AND CIVIL LAWS AND SHOULD SUCH AN ATTEMPT BE MADE, SPONSOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO SEEK REMEDIES AND DAMAGES (INCLUDING ATTORNEY'S FEES) FROM ANY SUCH ENTRANT TO THE FULLEST EXTENT OF THE LAW, INCLUDING CRIMINAL PROSECUTION.
8. **Rules/Winners List:** To receive a list of winners or an additional copy of these Official Rules, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: 8205 Santa Monica Blvd., PO #1-439, West Hollywood, CA 90069. Please specify "Rules" or "Winners List". VT residents may omit return postage. You can also visit www.polarexpressmovie.com to view the Official Rules during the Sweepstakes Period.
9. **Sponsor**: Warner Bros. Pictures 4000 Warner Bros. Bldg. 154, Room 2225, Burbank, CA 91522
10. **Sweepstakes Administrator:** NCompass, Inc. 8223 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, CA 90069

For more information and materials on **The Polar Express Reading Challenge**, go to www.polarexpressmovie.com. For more information on NEA's Read Across America literacy initiative, go to www.nea.org/readacross. The National Education Association represents the 2.7 million teachers, education support professionals, retired, and student educators in America's public schools.

Start a "Train Reaction" and Help a Child Read!

The Polar Express Reading Challenge Reading Log

Take a magical reading journey on *The Polar Express*! Each book you and your friends read during **The Polar Express Reading Challenge** will raise one dollar to buy books for school libraries and students who need them. Best of all, you'll be helping to share the magic of reading with other kids!

Your reading adventure can take you to the North Pole and beyond—you decide your destinations by the books you choose to read between October 1 and October 22. When you enter the Challenge, you'll get the chance to win a special screening of the new movie *The Polar Express* for your entire class, plus signed books, posters, and more!

Keep track of the books you've read by writing their titles and authors on the Reading Log below. Beginning October 1, send us this form, or have your teacher send it, **postmarked by October 22** to: Polar Express Challenge, 8205 Santa Monica Blvd., P.O. #1-194, West Hollywood, CA 90069. We'll use your name and address to enter you in this contest.

Student Name and Classroom	**School Name**
Student Address:	**School Address**
Teacher Name and Phone Number	**NEA Member?** _____

Title	Author

Have you finished? Can you hear the bells?
They're ringing in another reader! Congratulations on completing your journey!

All Aboard…

Classroom Activities for **The Polar Express Reading Challenge**

Start a Train Reaction: Kick-off the Reading Challenge with a visit from the train's conductor—you, in disguise! You may want to wear an official-looking hat or a whistle around your neck. Explain **The Polar Express Reading Challenge** to your students and then distribute the Reading Log, which will allow children to keep track of their reading during the weeks of the challenge.

As Your Readers Journey…
Keep enthusiasm high for completing **The Polar Express Reading Challenge** with activities such as **Punching "Tickets"**: Each time a student completes another book and adds it to the Reading Log, hole-punch the Challenge entry form to help them visually track their progress. And remind your readers that each book read by October 22 represents one dollar pledged to support school libraries

Decorate the "Station": Devote one area in your classroom to a bulletin board or mural all about **The Polar Express Reading Challenge**. Ask students to post drawings of scenes from the books they've read as part of the Reading Challenge, along with written book recommendations, so they can share ideas with each other.

Brainstorming Activity: Books about the Arctic
Pack your bags! Your students are about to embark on a three-week reading journey. Travelers often choose to read books all about the places they are going to see. What books might your students bring along to complement their "journey" to the North Pole? You will want to come prepared with titles that fit in with this study, but before introducing them to your students, brainstorm together what kinds of books might add to the trip. Perhaps books to keep them warm as they travel the frozen tundra: *The Magic School Bus in the Arctic: A Book about Heat* by Joanna Cole (Scholastic, 1998) or *Everybody Serves Soup* by Norah Dooley (Carolrhoda Picture Books, 2000) work well. Perhaps they should prepare for unusual arctic weather phenomena with *Arctic Lights, Arctic Nights* by Debbie S. Miller (Walker & Company, 2003) or *Whale Snow* by Debby Dahl Edwardson (Charlesbridge Publishing, 2003). Titles about Arctic exploration, polar bears, caribou, survival on the tundra, and the indigenous people who have lived in the Arctic for centuries will add to the collection. You may even use an old suitcase to display your selections.

Polar Expressions: Guiding Questions for a Polar Express Book Conversation

- Why, in the story, can children hear the bell but adults cannot?
- Ask the children if they have a possession that holds as much meaning for them as the boy's bell holds for him.
- Open a discussion about what students think Chris Van Allsburg wants the bell to represent.

Writing Activity: Metaphor and Simile in *The Polar Express*
One of the most striking features of *The Polar Express* is its skillful use of similes and metaphors. In the book, children drink "hot cocoa as thick and rich as melted chocolate bars," and the train runs along, "rolling over peaks and through valleys like a car on a roller coaster."

Point out to your students that the same image might have been described in a plain and boring way. For example, "the cocoa was sweet and good," or "the train went up and down the hills."

Discuss with your students how using comparison in descriptions can make the story more exciting and interesting. Read the book to them and ask them to raise their hands each time they hear a comparison. Encourage them to try out using a metaphor or simile in their own writing that day.

The Big Event: Reward Your Readers with a Polar Express Pajama Party
When students' Reading Log's are complete, it's time to celebrate! On the day of the party, students should be prepared to bring their pajamas. Let parents know several days before the party about the event—you may even want to invite parents to join in the fun (wearing *their* pajamas as well!) Keep in mind that some students may forget or be self-conscious about their sleepwear. It will be helpful if you have some large t-shirts on hand. Before children arrive, you will want to have set up chairs in rows like seats on a train. Don't forget the bell to represent the one Santa gives the boy in the story! Before beginning the read aloud, collect tickets from each child as he or she climbs aboard the "train." Dim the lights and call "All Aboard!" After reading Chris Van Allsburg's *The Polar Express*, ring the bell and ask children what they hear! Finish the event with food fun—train-shaped cookies or sandwiches from a train-shaped cookie cutter, hot cocoa "as thick and rich as melted chocolate bars" and candy with nougat centers "as white as snow."

For More Information and Ideas:
Visit the Polar Express site (www.polarexpress.com) and click on Teachers/Librarians for in-depth lesson plans on *The Polar Express* and all of Chris Van Allsburg's books. You and your students can go to Chris Van Allsburg's site (www.chrisvanallsburg.com) for more great ideas and materials including fun interactive elements.

Reading Tips for Parents

The National Education Association, Warner Bros. Pictures, and the Houghton Mifflin Company invite you to start a "train reaction" in your community and your home. Help us celebrate the release of the film adaptation of Chris Van Allsburg's classic book *The Polar Express* by joining **The Polar Express Reading Challenge**—not only will you help kids discover the excitement of reading, but every book your child reads represents one dollar pledged to support our school libraries.

Parents, caregivers, and educators are our conductors in this campaign—at home with your child, you are the guide on this magical journey through the world of reading. Here are some ideas for successful adventures with books:

- **Read together.** Your child has been invited to participate in **The Polar Express Reading Challenge**. We encourage him or her to read as many books as possible between October 1-22, 2004. Talk with your child about the reading preferences that are beginning to develop and select books for your reading journey together.
- **Encourage questions and discussions about what's read.** Your child will learn more from what he/she has read if you talk about it together. Listen to your child's ideas and opinions and respond to them. You won't need to act as conductor for these family book talks—freestyle give-and-take promotes active learning.
- **Have fun.** Your idea of fun may differ from your child's. Try to find different ways to engage them, such as having them read to you, writing their own books, or dramatizing a favorite story. Even a simple conductor's or engineer's cap can make reading aloud together more lively and memorable for your child.
- **Enter the Reading Challenge!** Help your child list the books you've shared on the Reading Challenge Reading Log and send the log—or have your child's teacher send it—by mail to: Polar Express Challenge, 8205 Santa Monica Blvd., P.O. #1-194, West Hollywood, CA 90069. Reading Logs must be postmarked by October 22 to be entered in the random drawing.

Booklists, reading resources, and more ways that you and your family can start a train reaction in reading that lasts a lifetime can be found at www.polarexpressmovie.com and www.nea.org/readacross.

Start a "Train Reaction" and Help a Child Read!
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